

Volkswagen's Dirty Lies / Test-Tube Puppies

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AMERICA'S ABORTION WARS

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DOGS OF WAR:
A boy stands on a street next to dogs in Kabul, Afghanistan. "The reality is that people do not want to evacuate without their pets," a director at World Animal Protection says.



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Extremists on both sides of the abortion battle are hypocritical and ignoring an easy—and moral—solution. *by Kurt Eichenwald*

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Who saves the animals suffering and dying in Syria's war zone? *by Rachel Nuwer*

COVER CREDIT: ILLUSTRATION BY SINELAB

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BIG SHOTS

CHINA

Say Geez!

Beijing—Selfie sticks and smartphones pierce the smoggy air in Tiananmen Square at a flag-raising ceremony on December 9, after the city issued a “red alert” for air pollution. The first such alert in Beijing coincided with a conference in Paris where Chinese delegates and those from almost 200 other countries were hammering out a landmark climate accord that commits all countries to cutting carbon emissions and holding average global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) or less above preindustrial temperatures.



DAMIR SAGOLJ



SAUDI ARABIA

**One
Woman,
One Vote**

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—Women leave a polling station after casting their votes in the kingdom's municipal elections on December 12. For the first time, women were allowed to vote—and run—in such elections. However, female candidates were forced to campaign from behind a partition or had to be represented by a man, and they had to be accompanied by a male guardian in order to vote in a country where it is still illegal for them to drive. Women won at least 17 seats out of 2,100 being contested.



AHMED YOSRI

SYRIA

Last Bus

Homs, Syria—Syrian rebel fighters peer out of a bus window on December 9 as they evacuate Waer, the last opposition-held district in the central city of Homs, under a truce with the Syrian government. Homs Governor Talal Barazi said around 400 women and children and 300 rebel fighters were allowed to leave the country's third-largest city under the deal, which is backed by the United Nations. Homs is considered the birthplace of the revolution against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and turning it over to government troops was a blow to the rebels, who vowed to continue their struggle.



LOUAI BESHARA









MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

CANADA

Welcome Home

Mississauga, Ontario—Canada's new prime minister, Justin Trudeau, greets the first planeload of Syrian refugees as they arrive from Beirut at Toronto Pearson International Airport on December 11. Canada has pledged to take up to 25,000 refugees by the end of February, and businesses, families, small towns and big cities have all volunteered clothing, shelter and money to help the refugees settle in. The warm greeting was in marked contrast to the United States, which has seen anti-Muslim rhetoric reach new heights on the GOP campaign trail.



MARK BLINCH



P A G E O N E

HEALTH

VOLKSWAGEN

TURKEY

TAXES

POLITICS

RUSSIA

WHY VOLKSWAGEN CHEATED

Intense ambition and a rigid corporate culture created the conditions for lying at Germany's biggest company

ON DECEMBER 10, Volkswagen Chairman Hans-Dieter Pötsch made a public admission: A group of the company's engineers decided to cheat on emissions tests in 2005 because they couldn't find a technical solution within the company's "time frame and budget" to build diesel engines that would meet U.S. emissions standards. When the engineers did find a solution, he said, they chose to keep on cheating, rather than employ it. "We are not talking about a one-off mistake, but a whole chain of mistakes that was not interrupted at any point along the timeline," he said, announcing the preliminary results of an internal investigation at Volkswagen into the crisis at a press conference at the company's headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany. Volkswagen admitted this past autumn to installing illegal cheat software into the engines of 500,000 U.S. vehicles and 11 million vehicles worldwide.

Noting that Volkswagen had suspended nine managers believed to be involved in the deception, Pötsch added that the scandal arose from

"a mindset in some areas of the company that tolerated breaches of the rules." But Pötsch did not answer perhaps the biggest question of the scandal: Why did Volkswagen cheat on that particular engine at that particular time?

Part of the answer lies, *Newsweek* has learned, in the unprecedented tightening of emissions standards by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for model year 2004, when the agency dramatically raised the bar on how much pollution new cars in the U.S. would be permitted to discharge into the atmosphere—presenting a virtually impossible engineering challenge to the world's automakers.

Since the mid-1970s, the EPA has introduced progressively more stringent emissions standards for light-duty vehicles, including cars, sport-utility vehicles and small pickup trucks. But the requirements for model year 2004 were among the toughest ever. The federal agency slashed the amount of nitrogen oxide it allowed cars to emit from their tailpipes by more than 94

BY
**LEAH MCGRATH
GOODMAN**
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BUGGIN': New CEO Matthias Müller has to explain how and why Volkswagen cheated, and change the deeply entrenched corporate culture.



ODD ANDERSEN/AFP/GETTY

percent—from 1.25 to 0.07 grams a mile. Nitrogen oxide is a pollutant found in vehicle exhaust and cigarette smoke that, along with carbon dioxide, the EPA heavily regulates. Pollutants from tailpipe emissions can cause premature death, bronchitis, asthma and respiratory and cardiovascular illness.

The new standards posed an enormous challenge to automakers looking to offer fuel-efficient diesel vehicles to the U.S. market. Diesel cars get more torque, achieve better mileage and hold their long-term value better than most gasoline-burning vehicles, but the exhaust contains more nitrogen dioxide than most gasoline-powered engines. In Europe, where emissions standards are not as strict as in the U.S., more than 50 percent of vehicles sold are now diesels. Compare that with less than 5 percent of vehicles sold in the U.S. With so much room to grow, Volkswagen sought to crack the U.S. diesel market—and, in the process, become the world's top-selling automaker.

Volkswagen's rivals, including Mazda, Honda, Nissan and Hyundai, also had their eye on the U.S. diesel market—but they took one look at the new EPA standards and decided to scrap their plans. The main challenge, several of the companies said, was that it was too difficult to meet the new standards while maintaining engine performance and staying on budget.

But Volkswagen saw the 2004 EPA decision as an irresistible challenge—and an opportunity. The automaker rolled out its new-model diesels in the U.S. in 2008 and won the first Green Car of the Year award ever granted to a diesel at the Los Angeles Auto Show.

Volkswagen's remarkable feat of engineering was a sham. The cheat software, it turns out, was the primary reason for the car's apparently low emissions and excellent fuel economy. In September 2015, the company acknowledged to the EPA that it cheated. Engineers had inserted what the EPA calls a "defeat device" in the engine—in this case, software that concealed the true amount of nitrogen oxide Volkswagen's diesel engines were producing. When federal



officials tested the vehicles with the cheat software in the lab to certify them for the road, they produced lower emissions than in real-world driving conditions, where they discharged emissions of up to nearly 40 times the legal limit, the EPA says.

Investigators inside and outside the company are now trying to get answers to two key questions: Why did the deception happen, and how many people were involved? *Newsweek* has learned that a combination of factors fueled the deception, and that the conspiracy is likely wider than previously reported.

As recently as October, the company was suggesting that the number of employees involved in the cheating was small. Michael Horn, chief executive of Volkswagen Group of America, told U.S. lawmakers in sworn testimony: "This was a couple of software engineers who put this in, for

+
UNDER THE HOOD:
Some VW workers told supervisors about the cheating in 2011, but were ignored; about 50 employees have admitted they knew something about the deception.



whatever reason.” He then said that three engineers were involved. Then he said he did not know the exact number. He added, “To my understanding, this was not a corporate decision.”

Newsweek has learned that Volkswagen engineers and technicians tried to alert superiors about the emissions-rigging activities as far back as 2011 but were ignored. “We have had several complaints about people saying they tried to warn the company about this, which is being checked by our external investigator,” Volkswagen’s head of external and investor relations, Hans-Gerd Bode, tells *Newsweek*. Volkswagen’s external investigator, law firm Jones Day, which is overseeing an internal probe at the company, declined to comment.

About 50 Volkswagen employees—mostly based in Wolfsburg—have confessed they had knowledge of activities related to the emissions scandal as part of Volkswagen’s amnesty program. The program, which ended November 30, applies only to non-managers, but the large number of rank-and-file employees coming forward suggests there may have been more people aware of, or involved in, the deception than previously thought.

The number of engineers, technicians and managers needed to coordinate the vehicle functions with emissions-cheating software would likely be substantial. For instance, the cheat software that the EPA identified was “very sophisticated,” says Christopher Grundler, director of the EPA’s office of Transportation and Air Quality. The offending computer code incorporated sensors that tracked the positioning of the steering wheel and car wheels, as well as numerous emissions controls. “There are lots of different levers,” he says. Writing the code could, in theory, have been the work of one person, but making it work with other parts of the engine is a more complicated task that would likely have involved more people.

Volkswagen hasn’t suspended anyone from its lower ranks, Bode says. The nine suspended managers include members of the company’s Audi, Porsche and supervisory boards, as well as quality-control managers, plant managers and engine designers, according to sources at Volkswagen.

A key reason engineers at Volkswagen may have thought they could get away with the deception is that detecting cheat code in a vehicle is nearly impossible if you don’t know where



to look, says Bruce Ricker, senior software engineer for Informatics Holdings in Plano, Texas. He wrote engine software code for Volkswagen and other automakers as a consultant for 18 years in Germany. “This one isn’t shocking,” he says. “A John Deere tractor has over 20 different computers, and vehicles can have over 50. That’s millions of lines of code. The vast majority of developers in a company don’t have the chance to look at that line by line. You don’t have time to scrutinize every piece of code. That is a luxury we don’t have.”

Because software engineers are often wrangling enormous amounts of code, he says, it would be fairly easy to stuff cheat code into a vehicle’s engine-control software and even replicate it millions of times over without it getting noticed. “It is highly likely that once the

“WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT A ONE-OFF MISTAKE, BUT A WHOLE CHAIN OF MISTAKES THAT WAS NOT INTERRUPTED AT ANY POINT ALONG THE TIMELINE.”

code was written, it could easily be installed in millions of cars,” he says. “Really, if someone wanted to sneak it in, they absolutely could. It’s programs all over the place in these cars. It’s programs talking to programs. Literally, there are tens of thousands of programs. It’s impossible for any one of us to look over the whole thing, even if we wanted to.” Ricker returned from Germany in 2014.

The EPA’s Grundler agrees. “A single vehicle has around 100 million lines of code,” he says. In the case of Volkswagen, the cheat software was buried under millions of lines of code, which meant finding it, Grundler says, was extremely difficult.



It's even possible the code was not written by someone at Volkswagen, Ricker says. "The guy who wrote it could have been some third-party contractor," he says. "He could be sitting in the Bahamas right now and laughing at this."

While Volkswagen has not revealed the exact manner in which third parties may have played a role here, German company Robert Bosch GmbH, the world's biggest automotive supplier, admitted in the early stages of the scandal that it supplied the cheat software used by Volkswagen but denied any wrongdoing in a statement. "How these components are calibrated and integrated into complete vehicle systems is the responsibility of each automaker," it said.

The EPA, along with the U.S. Justice Department, is investigating Bosch, which reportedly warned Volkswagen in 2007 not to use the offending software in real-world driving conditions, which could be illegal, according to the German newspaper *Bild Am Sonntag*, citing an internal communication it obtained between the two companies.

But the ease with which VW's engineers could have perpetrated the deception doesn't explain *why* they did it. Engineers at any car company could have done the same thing. So why Volkswagen?

People familiar with the company tell *Newsweek* that the unique corporate culture of Volkswagen, inextricable from its headquarters in Wolfsburg—one of Germany's richest cities—led to an environment in which employees live and work under a highly centralized hierarchy that expects them to perform, no matter what the demands. "Volkswagen is completely different from the other automakers," says Ferdinand Dudenhöffer, director of the Center for Automotive Research at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. "It's not democratic; it's autocratic. It's a system focused on its roots and Wolfsburg. It's not at all global in its thinking."

Volkswagen's top brass may never have directly instructed employees to install the cheat software, Dudenhöffer says, but the company's work environment is well known for

eschewing debate and dissent. "Sometimes you can do things without explicitly ordering them," he says. "At Volkswagen, the management might say, 'Please think again on that, and if you don't find a solution, we may need to find another engineer.' You may find yourself in a situation where, if you want to keep your job, you have no escape."

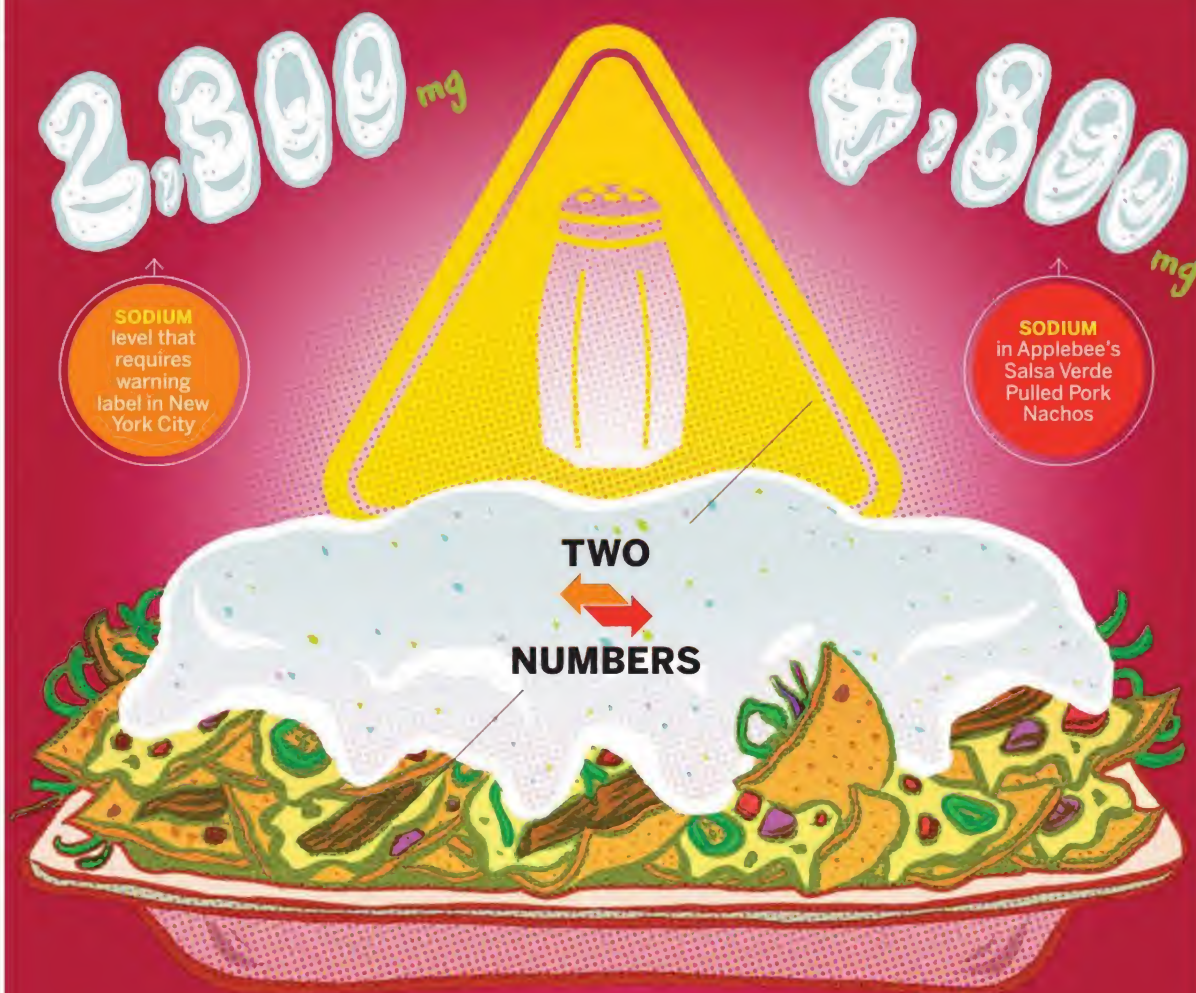
Another reason that many of Volkswagen's employees may have remained quiet about the emissions-cheating issue for so long—even if they didn't want to—says one Volkswagen executive, is the company's bonus system, which is unusually generous to all employees, from the assembly line to the CEO, and rewards consensus. Volkswagen pays bonuses not only for individual performance and company performance but also goes the extra step of rewarding team performance, he says, which creates financial incentive not to offer dissenting opinions. "Even assembly line workers get a bonus, but the higher up you go in the company, the higher the percentage of your remuneration is from your bonus," says the executive, who asked not to be named because he still works for the company.

In a letter to employees in September, Volkswagen's labor leader, Bernd Osterloh, acknowledged that the company needed to

"VOLKSWAGEN IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER AUTOMAKERS. IT'S NOT DEMOCRATIC; IT'S AUTOCRATIC."

change its workplace culture and create "a climate in which problems aren't hidden but can be openly communicated to superiors, [and where] it's possible and permissible to argue with your superior about the best way to go."

The scandal is likely to change Volkswagen's culture and approach to doing business in numerous ways. It has also altered the way environmental regulators around the world go about their work. The crisis has shown many regulators how to spot cheat code, something many of them did not know how to do before, Grundle says. "This matter has taught us a lot," he tells *Newsweek*. "We know how to look for these types of defeat devices now. We no longer have to go through the haystack to find the needle." ■



Salty Language

NEW YORK CITY MENUS NOW COME WITH WARNINGS ABOUT EXCESS SODIUM

Visitors to Applebee's, home of the Salsa Verde Pulled Pork Nachos, and many other dining establishments in New York City will now notice not just one salt shaker on the table but several more dotting their menus.

The city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene now requires chain restaurants with 15 or more locations nationally to add warning labels—the icon is a white salt shaker against a black triangle—to denote dishes that contain 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium. They also need to post a statement that explains the icon and

warns that “high sodium intake can increase blood pressure and risk of heart disease and stroke.”

The 2,300-mg threshold corresponds to the amount of sodium in one teaspoon of salt and to the maximum daily limit recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 from two federal departments, Agriculture and Health and Human Services. The guidelines, due to get a 2015 update, say many Americans should set an even stricter limit of 1,500 mg per day (for example, people aged 51 or older, African-Americans and those with hypertension, diabetes or

chronic kidney disease).

The American Heart Association cut its limit from 2,300 mg to 1,500 mg in 2010. Americans consume an average of 3,400 mg of sodium daily, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The warnings will have to appear on Applebee's chicken quesadilla (2,800 mg) and American BLT (2,610 mg), as well the nachos; Chili's Margarita Grilled Chicken (2,450 mg); Olive Garden's Tour of Italy entrée (3,250 mg); and Burger King's BK Ultimate Breakfast Platter (2,470 mg).

The National Restau-

rant Association has filed a lawsuit challenging the labeling mandate as beyond the Board of Health's authority and a burden on restaurant operators. Applebee's, however, said it had no problem complying: “We are committed to the well-being of our guests and providing them with information to make educated choices when dining at Applebee's.”

For those restaurants less committed to their diners' health, fines for noncompliance are just \$200.

BY
STAV ZIV
@stavziv

SOURCES: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE, APPLEBEE'S



A DEADLY DOUBLE GAME

Can the U.S. convince Turkey to stop the flow of ISIS fighters across its southern border?

FOR SEVERAL years, the White House has watched with mounting frustration as Turkey—supposedly an American ally in the war against the Islamic State militant group (ISIS)—has left a crucial portion of its southern border thinly guarded. Behind closed doors, U.S. officials have urged President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to do something to stop foreign fighters who fly into Istanbul, then slip across the border into Syria to replenish the ranks of the jihadi group. They also want Erdogan to block the trucks loaded with ammunition and explosives that rumble across the border and to crack down on Turkish middlemen taking part in the oil-smuggling trade, which nets the self-declared caliphate roughly \$1.5 million a day. All to no avail.

But in the wake of last month's ISIS attacks in Paris, in which one of the attackers traveled from Syria to Europe through Turkey, the U.S. is now making its misgivings public, all but accusing the Turkish leader of playing a double game. "I have had repeated conversations with President Erdogan about the need to close the border between Turkey and Syria," President Barack Obama said on December 1 in the French capital. "If you've got foreign fighters...returning to their home countries, they're likely candidates for engaging in the kind of terrorist attacks that we saw here."

U.S. ties with Turkey have long been troubled, going as far back as the 2003 Iraq War, when Ankara refused to let U.S. troops invade from

Turkish territory. But with the rise of ISIS and the war in Syria, the relationship has worsened considerably. Turkish officials have repeatedly denied they support the jihadi group, despite allegations to the contrary: Roughly six months ago, a U.S. raid against ISIS in Syria reportedly produced documents that revealed strong links between Turkey and the Islamist militants in Raqqa. Either way, analysts say Ankara regards ISIS and other Syrian rebel groups as useful enemies in the war against its main adversaries: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Kurdish militants on the other side of the border. But because Turkey, with its close proximity to the Middle East, is such a critical NATO ally, the White House has been unable to get Erdogan to bend. "Turkey shares a 500-mile border with Syria and is the NATO outpost closest to the conflict," wrote Steven Cook, a Middle East expert at the Council on Foreign Relations. "[That's] Erdogan's get-out-of-jail card."

But Obama may now have some leverage. In late November, Turkey shot down a Russian warplane as it bombed Ankara-backed rebels operating near the Turkish-Syrian border. In response, an angry Russian President Vladimir Putin banned Turkish agricultural imports, halted a \$10 billion pipeline to bring Russian gas into Europe through Turkey and demanded an apology. Erdogan defended the shoot-down and called an emergency meeting of NATO,

BY
JONATHAN BRODER
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NOT EXACTLY EYE TO EYE: When they met in Paris on December 1, President Obama urged Turkey's President Erdoğan to do more to cut off the supply of money and fighters to ISIS in Syria.

where he reminded member countries of their obligations to protect Turkey in case the confrontation escalates.

Though Obama has publicly affirmed American support for Turkey, a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, citing administration rules, tells *Newsweek* the shoot-down has made Ankara concerned about Russian retaliation. As a result, the official said, "they're looking to us to calm things down" between them.

Doing so won't be easy. While a direct Russian military confrontation with Turkey appears unlikely, the strong-willed Putin appears in no mood to reconcile. "They will regret what they did more than once," Putin vowed in his December 3 state of the nation speech at the Kremlin.

PUTIN VOWED THAT TURKEY "WILL REGRET WHAT THEY DID MORE THAN ONCE."

Some analysts believe Putin will exact his revenge in Syria, where Erdoğan has been supporting Turkmen militants fighting against Assad. As long as Putin props up Assad militarily, they say, there is little chance he will be completely pushed from power. So the only

way Erdogan can have a say in Syria's future is by securing a place at the negotiation table. Yet Soner Cagaptay, a Turkey expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, says Turkey's seat at that table is assured only if its Turkmen proxies can maintain their hold on territory in northwestern Syria. And since the shoot-down, Russian warplanes have stepped up airstrikes against those fighters.

"Putin's dream now is to drive these rebels out of Syria, a scenario that would mean complete defeat of Ankara's Syria policy," Cagaptay wrote for War on the Rocks, a website that focuses on national security issues. The more the Russians bomb, he added, the more likely it is that another wave of refugees will flood into Turkey, adding to the estimated 2 million Syrians who already

have fled across the border.

If his feud with Turkey persists, analysts say, Putin also could provide arms to Kurdish militants in Syria to help them seize the 60-mile strip of land Obama has been complaining about. That would give the Syrian Kurds control of the entire border with Turkey—a nightmare scenario for Erdogan, who fears Turkey's Kurds might join their brethren and form a breakaway state.

Erdogan has options too. He could retaliate by closing off the Bosphorus, the narrow channel that separates Europe and Asia and provides Russia's Black Sea fleet with its only outlet to the Mediterranean. He could even allow Muslim fighters from Turkey's Chechen and North Caucasus communities to cross into Syria to fight the Russians.

OIL TO PLAY FOR:
A Syrian Kurdish fighter patrols a hill overlooking an oil field near the village of Derek, Syria, in July. The Kurds have proved the most effective force against ISIS in Syria, to the alarm of Turkey.

MAURICIO LIMA/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX



But so long as the Putin-Erdogan feud continues, the White House thinks it can pressure its Turkish allies to better secure the border with Syria. U.S. officials say the administration now wants Turkey to deploy as many as 30,000 soldiers to plug the flow of fighters and oil once and for all.

Turkey seems to be listening. On December 3, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Ankara would do everything it could to control the border with Syria, including building “physical barriers” to close it off. But he also cautioned critics to not expect quick results. Any border arrangement would have to allow for the transit of Syrian refugees, he said, adding that ISIS fighters in the area would still try to cross back and forth. “There is nothing more difficult than



protecting a border on the other side of which there is no political authority,” Davutoglu said.

In what appeared to be a move to mollify the Americans, Ankara recently sent several hundred Turkish troops to northern Iraq to train Kurdish soldiers for an eventual counteroffensive to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul from ISIS militants, who seized it in June 2014. “This is part of the fight against Daesh,” a senior Turkish official told Reuters on December 4, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

U.S. officials welcome Turkey’s contribution, but the Obama administration is still concerned about its follow-through. The last time Turkey made such a promise, it broke it. In July, after months of discussions, Erdogan and Obama agreed to a plan that called for U.S. and Turk-



TURKEY REGARDS ISIS AND OTHER SYRIAN REBEL GROUPS AS USEFUL ENEMIES IN ITS WAR AGAINST BASHAR AL-ASSAD AND THE KURDS.

ish forces to bombard ISIS, paving the way for U.S.-backed Syrian rebels to seize control of the border strip. But Erdogan apparently had second thoughts, worrying that removing ISIS would only benefit Turkey’s enemies—Assad and the Syrian Kurds. Days later, Turkish intelligence reportedly tipped off Islamist rebels, allowing them to kidnap a group of U.S.-trained fighters only minutes after they entered the country. Not surprisingly, Ankara denies the report. But either way, administration officials say Turkey’s double game continues.

The U.S. hopes it will soon come to an end. **N**

THE FEELING ISN'T MUTUAL

By not earning profits, Vanguard has earned the wrath of the IRS, and investors may end up paying the price

IF YOU ARE AMONG the 20 million Americans saving for retirement through Vanguard, you may be in for an expensive shock. The nation's largest mutual fund company is under fire for not taking more of your money. That sounds ridiculous, but based on arcane provisions of the endlessly complex U.S. tax code, the Pennsylvania-based company may soon be forced to pay a staggering amount of back taxes because of the famously low fees it charges to manage your nest egg.

Two years ago, David Danon, a former Vanguard tax lawyer who is now a whistleblower no one would ever confuse with Erin Brockovich, filed formal complaints with the Internal Revenue Service and many state taxing agencies claiming that Vanguard's low fees are an illegal tax dodge. He argues that Vanguard should have charged investors an extra \$19.8 billion in investment fees this year alone and owes almost \$35 billion in taxes, interest and penalties since 2007. Under a 2006 law, a tax whistleblower may get 15 to 30 percent of what the IRS collects, which means Danon could be heading for a \$10 billion payday.

Vanguard insists it does not owe any corporate income taxes, but Danon just collected a \$117,000 whistleblower bounty from Texas, which suggests the company paid that state at least \$2.3 million in taxes based on his information, because the reward rate there is 5 percent. Texas audited Vanguard four times last year, finding taxes owed in each case, public records show without reveal-

ing the amounts. In November, the California Franchise Tax Board sent Danon an email saying his complaint against Vanguard warranted assigning criminal investigators. Vanguard could be on the hook for about \$750 million there.

If Danon wins in other courts—and tax law seems to be on his side—people investing through Vanguard would accumulate much less money in their accounts because higher fees would cut into their investment gains. One of the most widely read tax scholars in America, professor Reuven Avi-Yonah of the University of Michigan Law School, says the case against Vanguard is clear-cut. “The IRS will win in court if it challenges Vanguard’s” policy of not earning profits, he tells *Newsweek*.

There is a double whammy here for Vanguard’s customers: Raising fees to cover those taxes could require quadrupling its average fee, according to Avi-Yonah, who is working with Danon on this issue. Increasing Vanguard’s average annual fee of \$2 per \$1,000 invested to the industry average would mean a fee of \$8.20. If the stock market goes up by 5 percent, or \$50 for every \$1,000 invested with Vanguard, the amount investors keep after fees would drop from \$48 to less than \$42. Over time, that smaller return takes a larger and larger bite from investors because there is less money to reinvest.

The paradox behind this dispute is that federal tax law assumes for-profit corporations like

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Vanguard Group Inc. earn a profit. But by design, the Vanguard Group does not earn any profits, even though every other major mutual fund company does. Congress has carved out 29 exceptions to taxing corporate profits under Section 501(c) of the tax code—it authorizes tax-exempt electric power cooperatives and even small nonprofit insurance companies—but there is no exception authorizing a company investing mutual fund money to operate without profits.

And why would a company do that? Most mutual funds are sold by an investment company created to make a profit by managing investors' money. These companies buy and sell stocks and bonds, keep records and do other work. They charge investors annual fees to cover their costs and generate a hefty profit. Industry records indicate that more than 30 cents out of each dollar in mutual fund fees goes for profits. That's extraordinarily

profitable—the 100,000 or so largest companies in America typically keep as profit less than 7 cents out of each dollar they collect from customers.

Vanguard Group does not take a profit from the mutual funds it manages because of its unique structure. The Vanguard Group is not an independent company; it is owned by all the investors in Vanguard mutual funds, and one board of directors oversees both. Vanguard Group founder Jack Bogle has said his motive in creating the Vanguard mutual funds was to maximize returns to investors through lower

A WHISTLEBLOWER MAY GET UP TO 30 PERCENT OF WHAT THE IRS COLLECTS SO DANON COULD BE HEADING FOR A \$10 BILLION PAYDAY.

EN VANGUARD! Danon says the mutual fund company fired him after he alleged it was using an illegal tax dodge; he's now pursuing complaints against it with the IRS and several states.





costs, not to maximize profits for the managers of those funds. Charging yourself a profit makes no sense, Bogle explained long ago.

Bogle also says the profit motive creates a conflict of interest between the investment company managers, who want to make as much as they can, and the mutual fund investors, who want to keep as much of their investment gains as they can. He maintains that eliminating the profit motive eliminates that conflict. It can also eliminate a huge tax bill, as Danon argues.

Making a profit matters because of a widely used tax dodge involving related companies, known as transfer pricing. Consider a company that manufactures shoes in Asia at a cost of \$2 a pair. While the shoes are on a ship crossing the Pacific, the company's manufacturing subsidiary in Asia transfers ownership of the shoes to a sister company in the Cayman Islands that exists only on paper. The Caymans subsidiary pays \$52 for the shoes, then resells the shoes to American retailers for \$60, producing gross profit of \$58. (And you pay \$120 at the register.)

Of the \$58 gross profit, \$50 was taken in the Caymans, where no tax is imposed. Edward Kleinbard, who for years was a prominent designer of tax shelters before he began exposing such techniques, says the goal of such maneuvers is earning "stateless income," so-called because no government taxes the profit.

To limit such ploys, Congress requires that internal company transactions be at *arm's length*. That means charging for all goods and services at close to what an independent company would demand.

But in Vanguard's case, there are no profits hidden offshore. Instead, investors keep more of what the market generates and, when they withdraw their money, pay higher taxes only because they have earned more money.

Danon's lawyer for his whistleblower claims, Stephen Sorensen, argues that under Section 482 of the tax code, "you are not allowed to offer services internally at cost except for a few truly administrative things." The Vanguard setup, he

says, "clearly does not qualify."

Sorensen acknowledges that "this is not the prototypical Section 482 case," in which tax havens are used to hide profits offshore, because Vanguard seeks no profits.

Sorensen and others say Congress could resolve Danon's complaint in several ways and allow Vanguard to stick with its low fees. One would be to add a line to Section 482 explicitly exempting from tax any mutual fund investment management company owned by the mutual funds it serves. That would surely set off a huge lobbying blitz by other mutual funds, which would like to see Vanguard forced to raise its fees and thereby lose its huge competitive advantage.

Another solution would be to add a 30th exemption to the list of nonprofit activities allowed in the tax code.

If Congress bails out Vanguard with either of those moves, it could add a requirement that Vanguard disclose how much it pays its executives and money managers, perhaps all those making \$1 million or more. "Nobody has any idea what anyone at Vanguard makes," Sorensen

DANON ARGUES THAT VANGUARD SHOULD HAVE CHARGED INVESTORS AN EXTRA \$19.8 BILLION IN INVESTMENT FEES.


says. "They can pay themselves whatever they want because it's kind of a black box without any disclosures, and no one [who invests through them] cares because Vanguard's fees are so low."

Even with those low fees, those managers' pay could be significant since the Vanguard Group manages more than \$3 trillion, a fifth of all American mutual fund assets. Given how much Congress has expanded disclosures of executive pay at both nonprofits and publicly traded companies, requiring such disclosures for mutual fund companies is likely to enjoy broad political support.

Or Congress could do nothing and see if the IRS smacks Vanguard with a \$35 billion tax bill. That would make for a lot of unhappy Vanguard investors, but for all those competing companies charging higher fees, the news would be glad tidings of great joy. ■


Names in the News

UP, DOWN AND SIDEWAYS

 @WisdomWatch



MARTIN SHKRELI

 “Pharma Bro” uses some of his windfall from price hike on lifesaving AIDS drug to purchase one-of-a-kind Wu-Tang Clan album for \$2 million. Assures world he won’t share music with anyone except Taylor Swift. Tweets out date requests when he needs plus one. Can’t wait for Tay Tay’s Shkreli-themed breakup song, “You Belong With No One.”

PUNCH-UPS

 Ukrainian MP tosses prime minister delivering report, sparking brawl. MP suspended for “act of idiocy.” Same rule for James Inhofe, who threw snowball in U.S. Senate to “disprove” climate science?



BALD EAGLES

 During photo shoot, bald eagle lashes out at the Donald with beak and claw. Trump captured flinching on Vine video, but states he wasn’t scared. He then called for all eagles to be on no-fly list.



HOVERBOARDS

 Another day, another hoverboard explosion: Airlines move to ban Segway-esque toys as they spontaneously combust and burst into flames, putting crotch region at risk. Buyer, buyer, pants on fire.



MONOGAMY

 Prairie voles form monogamous pairs, but not all are faithful. Short memories make some males more likely to stray. Also more likely to write “pics please” when asking for date on Twitter.



BILL MURRAY

 Twitter hoax claims Bill Murray can take Wu-Tang album from Shkreli. And should Shkreli make headlines just for being rich, arrogant and controversial? Next up, the latest on Donald Trump.



THE WAR IS OVER...

EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE
ABORTION BATTLE ARE HYPOCRITICAL
AND ARE IGNORING AN EASY—AND
MORAL—SOLUTION BY KURT EICHENWALD

IF YOU WANT IT TO BE



I AM OPPOSED TO ABORTION. I BELIEVE WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE. THIS IS NOT A CONTRADICTION.

UNFORTUNATELY, in a country torn apart by absolutists, the abortion wars are stuck in a brutal stalemate. Both arguments are infused with hypocrisy, and consequences often go unconsidered while bumper-sticker logic prevails. Making it worse are politicians who use abortion as reliable red meat for their supporters—both liberal and conservative—by continuing to beat the same drums America has heard for decades.

Attempts to cut this Gordian knot are often dismissed out of hand, with the motives of the messenger attacked mercilessly. Male commentators are frequently—and often rightfully—accused by pro-choice advocates of “mansplaining,” a term for men telling women what to think. Anyone broaching the other side of the argument is deemed a baby killer, even when such hyperbole spawns murders like the ones at a Planned Parenthood in Colorado last month. But the reality is, neither side looks for a solution; they have simply descended into maudlin intellectual ping-pong, knocking the same claims back and forth, year after year. Those who are pro-choice believe, correctly, that all people have rights regarding their bodies. By that logic, an embryo or fetus is part of a woman, and she retains the right to make decisions as to whether she will bring that pregnancy to term. On the flip side, anti-abortion proponents argue that since every person alive was granted the right to be born, those who argue that life should be denied to others through an abortion are violating the golden rule.

But public policy is not a philosophy class. Decades of listening to activists scream at each other proves that answers will never come from them. Instead, the rational middle has to examine the hypocrisy and flaws in the activists’ positions and finally bring this war to an end.

KILL THE FAMOUS VIOLINIST?

A BUILDING is on fire. On one floor, five healthy babies are in cribs. On another, 10,000 embryos are in petri dishes, being grown for 10,000 women who want them implanted (new scientific advances guarantee that all the embryos will survive until birth). Because of the rapidly advancing flames, you have time to evacuate only one floor: Either five babies will die or 10,000 future humans will be destroyed.

Which do you choose?

Hopefully, the answer is obvious—anyone who decides to rescue globs of cells over living, breathing babies is a monster. But this hypothetical exposes the absurdity of the claim that women who choose abortion are “murdering” babies or that a human being pops into existence at conception, even though a zygote or embryo is no more sentient than a sperm.

Now change the numbers. Three babies and 1,000 fetuses at 21 weeks’ gestation. Again, all of the fetuses would survive to birth. Which do you choose—the three babies or the 1,000 fetuses? Or how about two babies versus 40 fetuses at 32 weeks, when both the babies and the fetuses could feel pain? What’s your choice? Change it one last time: one healthy baby or five fetuses at full term, 40 weeks. Now which do you choose?

This scenario shows how the moral issues surrounding abortion transform as a zygote grows to an embryo to a nonviable fetus, to a viable fetus, to a conscious being that could be born at any minute. The moral balance shifts as a fetus evolves, which is why viability was the standard adopted by the landmark case of *Roe v. Wade*, which recognized women’s right to abortion.

While it’s hard to believe, given the constant arguing about third-trimester abortions and fetal heartbeats, about 90 percent of abortions occur in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy; about 1.3 percent take place after the 21st week. And that 1.3 percent includes extremely complex circumstances, such as when a fetus has an incurable, dreadful disease or the mother is at risk of death.

A different hypothetical—crafted by Judith Jarvis Thomson, a prominent moral philosopher who

EITHER FIVE BABIES WILL DIE OR 10,000 FUTURE HUMANS WILL BE DESTROYED. WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE?



QUALITY OF DEATH: The nightmare Danielle Deaver was forced to endure after the birth of her daughter because of Nebraska's tough law changed her from an abortion opponent to a pro-choice advocate.

is professor emerita at MIT—strikes at the heart of another issue in this debate. Imagine a woman goes out for the night, and a stranger knocks her unconscious. When she awakens, she finds she has been hooked up to a famous violinist who must depend on the woman for life support. The woman has been placed in this circumstance without her consent. Thomson argues that the woman has the right to unhook herself should she choose, even if it means the death of the famous violinist.

That imaginary situation, of course, addresses the issue of rape. For a rape victim to be impregnated against her will, forced by law to carry the fetus, then forced into motherhood, is no different than requiring that unfortunate woman to remain hooked up to the violinist against her will. The woman's body is being used as sustenance for another without her playing any role in the decision; the choice of what to do—with the violinist or the pregnancy from rape—is hers alone.

There is a reason to use hypotheticals in emo-

tional debates like the one about abortion: intellectually honest combatants can't fall back on standard talking points. Sweeping declarations, such as the claim that embryos are babies, are exposed as nothing more than hot air when a hypothetical applies them literally. So one more. A pregnant woman is opposed to abortion and wants the child. But her water breaks at 22 weeks, meaning there will not be enough amniotic fluid for the fetus's lungs to develop. This innocent baby would have no possibility of living and would be in agony for as much as 15 minutes before dying. Which do you choose—an abortion or a newborn's excruciating death?

I lied. This is not a hypothetical. It happened in 2010 to Danielle Deaver, a resident of Grand Island, Nebraska. Unfortunately for her, Nebraska had passed a law declaring all abortions after 20 weeks illegal, so she was not allowed to decide what was best for her daughter. Since inducing birth would have been considered an abortion, Deaver was forced to carry her doomed child for 10 days. After the birth, Deaver held Elizabeth, her daughter, as she suffocated, one of the most terrifying and torturous ways to die.

Anti-abortion activists who never met the Deavers expressed remorse about the death but celebrated the fact that they had forced a decision on a woman they did not know. “Isn’t it more humane for the baby to die in a loving manner with comfort, care and in the arms of her parents than by the intentional painful death through abortion?” Julie Schmit-Albin, who heads Nebraska Right to Life, said at the time. In other words, strangers—who, by ignoring the science that shows a 22-week fetus does not feel pain in an abortion while proclaiming that a baby’s agonizing death by suffocation was one of “comfort,” revealed they have no comprehension of medicine—felt justified in using the law to decide what was best for Elizabeth, without regard to her mother’s wishes.

The trauma transformed Deaver from an abortion opponent to a supporter of women’s choice. She sent a letter telling her story to legislators and governors in states considering the 20-week abortion ban. “When asked about my circumstances, the author of Nebraska’s law said it worked as intended,” she wrote. “This

OUT WITH THE BATH WATER? The movement to defund Planned Parenthood ignores the fact that 97 percent of the health services it provides for women do not involve abortion.

is not about politics, it’s about leaving the practice of medicine up to doctors and most importantly, it’s about trusting women to make the best decisions for themselves and their families.”

She added, “That my pregnancy ended, that choice was made by God. How to handle the end of my pregnancy, that should have been private.”

KILL THE POOR?

ABORTION WILL never be stopped. That is one of the few indisputable facts in this debate.

One of the worst conceits of the anti-abortion movement is the belief that, if only enough laws are passed, abortion will end. It is a theory espoused by people too ignorant or too disinterested to study history. *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, which means only people over 60 might even remember what it was like when abortion was illegal in America. Based on surveys, the best estimates are that somewhere between 200,000 and 1.2 million illegal—and often unsafe—abortions were performed in the United States each year in the 1950s, according to Dr. David Grimes, former head of the abortion surveillance branch at the Centers for Disease



MAKING ABORTIONS ILLEGAL OR MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN WILL NOT DECREASE THE NUMBER OF TERMINATED PREGNANCIES.

Control and Prevention and author of the acclaimed book *Every Third Woman in America*. According to the Guttmacher Institute, a health research group, about 1.1 million abortions were performed in 2011—fewer than the highest estimate for illegal abortions during the 1950s, despite the fact that the country now has a much larger population.

This tells us that making abortions illegal or more difficult to obtain will not necessarily decrease the number of terminated pregnancies. According to the Texas Policy Evaluation Project—researchers from the University of Texas and three other universities and health institutions—international data shows that countries with onerous rules against abortion have a higher number of unsafe and illegal procedures, and the number of abortions is not reduced.

And some massive religious revival will not change those numbers. According to Lifeway Research, which provides analysis to church leaders, 70 percent of the women who have had an abortion identify themselves as Christians; 3 percent say they are Jewish, and 4 percent are atheists. About half of the Christian women surveyed—36 percent of all women who had a pregnancy terminated—were attending church once a month or more.

The point is, for all the Sturm und Drang by the anti-abortion activists over what many of them call the number of babies “murdered” since *Roe*, there is no reason to expect that those statistics would be lower if abortion had remained illegal. And remember, none of the statistics for illegal abortions in the 1950s account for the wealthy women who traveled to countries where the procedure was legal and safe. (The same will apply if abortions are made illegal tomorrow; anyone who can afford a trip to Mexico can access misoprostol, which causes early abortion and is available there, usually without a prescription.)

And make no mistake: Laws prohibiting abortion kill people. Grimes’s research showed that during the 1940s more than 1,000 women were known to have died each year from complications caused by an illegal abortion, although the true number was much higher. Every large hospital maintained a “septic abortion ward” for infected women with incomplete terminations.



PASSION PLAY: The question of when life begins is central to the debate for anti-abortion activists, but most doctors and scientists acknowledge that there is no satisfying answer to the question.

This underscores why the anti-abortion movement cannot be called pro-life: Its members support policies without concern for all the dead bodies left in their wake. Outlawing abortion is not the only law that kills; even modern attempts to restrict abortion—often based on lies and misrepresentations—have begun to jeopardize the health of women. For example, in 2013 Texas adopted a law requiring facilities that perform abortions to have a doctor on staff with admitting privileges at a hospital no more than 30 miles away and forced the clinics to meet standards for “ambulatory surgical centers,” which include onerous rules concerning buildings, equipment and staffing. The Supreme Court last month agreed to hear a challenge to the constitutionality of the law.

This rule is designed, its proponents lie, to make sure women receive top-flight medical care, even though abortions are among the safest of all medical procedures. According to a 2012 study by the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, about 9 women out of every 100,000 died in childbirth, compared

with 0.6 who died from an induced abortion. The rate of major complications is lower than 0.5 percent. Compare that to testosterone supplements: According to *JAMA*, the journal of the American Medical Association, men are 29 percent more likely to die, or have a heart attack or stroke, after just three years of use. Yet testosterone can be purchased online or at the neighborhood drugstore.

So while Texas politicians lie that they are protecting the health of women whose health is not threatened, they accomplish their true goal: making it virtually impossible for many women to get a legal procedure. Over half of the more than 40 facilities providing abortion care in the state have closed since 2013 because of the law. If the Supreme Court fails to strike down the law, there will be just 10 facili-

NO ONE CAN EXPLAIN WHY ANYONE WOULD NEED A BABY'S ARM OR BRAIN.

ties by the end of 2016, all clustered in large metropolitan areas. The result: More women will likely attempt to induce their own abortions because of the shutdowns, according to the Texas Policy Evaluation Project, which concluded that as many as 250,000 Texas women have done so in recent years. The researchers found that self-induction appears to be most common among Latina women near the Mexico border and women who confront obstacles in reaching reproductive health services.

Abortion opponents, whether out of ignorance or obsession, have grown accustomed to lying in order to advance policies or block abortions, with complete disregard for consequences. Lie about wanting to improve women's health, force clinics to close, and more women are likely to die.

Then comes the most recent falsehood told to shut down women's health clinics: secretly recorded videos edited to make it sound as if Planned Parenthood were illegally selling fetal tissue for a profit; it wasn't. Instead, the organization was asking women who had just had abortions if they would be willing to donate tissue samples to medical research. As the unedited tapes make clear, Planned Parenthood was receiving reimbursement for the cost incurred in getting the tissue to researchers. Yet politicians and activists have played on the public's unfamiliarity with issues involving fetal tissue, falsely proclaiming that Planned Parenthood is selling body parts, even though no one can explain why anyone would need a baby's arm or brain.

The truth is much less dramatic. Medical research-



ers have been using fetal tissue for almost a century, and almost everyone in this country has a better life because of that work. Anyone who received vaccines against rubella, polio or chicken pox benefited from medical work with fetal tissue. This research has saved millions of lives.

The current system for collecting and using fetal tissue emerged after lengthy debate. President Ronald Reagan appointed the 1988 Fetal Tissue Transplantation Panel to examine the ethical issues surrounding its use. The panel's recommendations were largely adopted in 1993, when Congress passed the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act. The law included significant consent requirements to separate the mother's decision on termination from the choice of whether to donate fetal tissue, and criminalized its sale or purchase but allowed reimbursement of expenses for institutions that collect, store and transport it. In other words, politicians and activists are now outraged by recordings showing Planned Parenthood doing what Congress intended.

Now Republican members of Congress are calling for all federal funding of Planned Parenthood to be cut off because of those deceptive videos. Once again, the consequences of trying to stop abortions are being ignored. According to its 2013-2014 annual report, Planned Parenthood conducted 4.5 million



PRO SOME LIFE: Robert Dear, charged with a shooting rampage at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs in November that left three dead, declared himself a "warrior for the babies."

tests for sexually transmitted diseases that year, provided various kinds of contraception 3.6 million times (which of course prevented millions of potential abortions), administered almost 1 million cancer screenings and delivered more than 1 million other health services to patients. It also performed 328,000 abortions, about 3 percent of its total activity.

Abortion activists and political leaders want the 97 percent destroyed to strangle that 3 percent. They never say where the millions of poor people who depend on Planned Parenthood for their health care can turn.

THE POST-BIRTH MOVEMENT

IN THIS DEBATE, choice is a lie. Abortion is a luxury available only to those who can afford it.

The freedom to choose an abortion also means the freedom to choose birth. Unfortunately, America spends so much time wringing its hands over theoretical inducements that might play a role in whether some well-off person chooses an abortion—such as feeling altruistic about contributing fetal tissue to medical research—that it does nothing about the issue that most directly leads to the



highest incidence of abortion: poverty.

Consider these statistics: According to the Guttmacher Institute, the abortion rate decreased 8 percent from 2000 through 2008. But the numbers look very different when broken down by financial status. For poor women, rates climbed by 18 percent, while women with high incomes saw a huge decline of 24 percent. The incidence of unintended pregnancies—something that can be limited by clinics like Planned Parenthood that provide birth control—saw a similar socioeconomic split: From 1994 to 2008, the number of such pregnancies among poor women skyrocketed by 55 percent; for more wealthy women, they dropped 24 percent.

What this means is that an increasing number of poor women are getting pregnant when they do not want to, which undoubtedly contributes to their higher rate of abortions. In fact, 42 percent of the women who decide to terminate pregnancies earn less than \$10,800 a year, which puts them below the federal poverty line for a single woman with no children; 7 out of 10 women who undergo an abortion make less than about \$22,000.

But that does not mean all of these women would choose to have an abortion in different financial circumstances. In fact, the most frequent reasons given by women for terminating a pregnancy are financial. In a survey conducted in 2004, three-quarters of the women who chose an abortion said it was because they did not have the financial ability to care for a child. Three-quarters also said that having a baby would interfere with their ability to work, go to school or care for other dependents.

Despite all the polls and surveys on abortion, no prominent study has explored whether removing the primary reason given for terminating a pregnancy would decrease the number of abortions. But there is no doubt that, if three-quarters of the women who

had an abortion did so out of financial necessity, the number of terminations would shrink if that problem was confronted.

Which brings us to a solution.

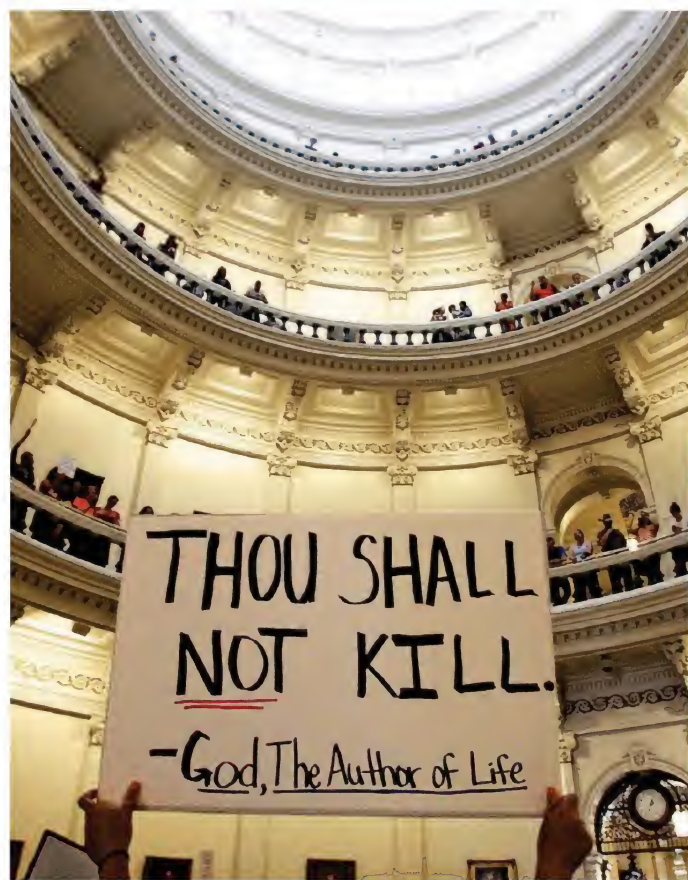
STOP ABORTIONS? WRITE A CHECK

PAY FOR IT. That's the plan.

Activists on both sides of this debate need to put down their placards and open their wallets. It is too easy to stomp outside an abortion clinic, screaming at patients before heading home for a nice dinner. But if told they could prevent the “murder of babies” by shelling out more in taxes and signing up to be adoptive parents, how many of them would do so without complaint? And if pro-choice advocates believe women should be allowed to make their decisions about pregnancy without outside pressure, how many of them would agree to cough up more cash so poor women could choose to keep their babies?

Many of the women who terminate pregnancies after 12 weeks report they did so because it took that long to raise the money for the abortion. No reasonable person would think someone under that kind of financial stress could afford complete prenatal care,

A THOUSAND CUTS: The number of clinics in Texas offering abortions dropped from 40 in 2013 to 20, and is expected to drop to just 10 by the end of 2016.



POLITICIANS AND ACTIVISTS ARE OUTRAGED BY RECORDINGS SHOWING PLANNED PARENTHOOD DOING WHAT CONGRESS INTENDED.

including vitamins, checkups, frequent sonograms and the rest. Nor could anyone rationally believe she would have enough money for diapers, formula, cribs and toys—much less clothing and food as the child grows—without keeping her job and earning more money. But that raises the question of who will care for the child if the mother goes to work.

The old line is that conservatives care about children up until the day they are born, but until all of us show more concern for the child than for the fetus, there is no chance of cutting back on abortions, regardless of the law. And pro-choice advocates—who are often portrayed as caring only about making abortion readily available—must also commit to helping those poor women who want to give birth.

Here are all the new costs:

The minimum wage will have to be increased; every time this has been advanced, conservatives have complained that it will cost jobs. And yet jobs kept growing every time the wage went up, because people had more money to spend, which in turn meant more business and more jobs. Poorer women would be more likely to give birth if they had greater financial security.

We must offer government-funded day care. In our current system, poor women struggle to find places to leave their kids; many low-income jobs now have on-call requirements, meaning an employee can be told to show up to work at almost any time. No mother has that kind of flexibility. With free day care, poor women would have more support if they choose to give birth.

Any woman who wants to keep her baby should be guaranteed quality prenatal care at no charge. All physicians will be required to explain the need for such care and provide additional education to increase the number of mothers who obtain regular checkups and follow prenatal nutrition recommendations. This program does not necessarily need to be paid for directly by taxpayers. A national network should be established linking couples who want to adopt—many of whom will hopefully come out of the anti-abortion movement—with women who choose to give birth. Those couples would be required to pay for all prenatal care and



NO OPTIONS: In early December, a Tennessee woman was charged with attempted murder for allegedly using a coat hanger to end her pregnancy. Tennessee is one of many states using stringent restrictions to legislate abortion clinics out of existence.

hospital expenses. Moreover:

Laws will have to be strengthened to ensure that employers pay a huge price for any attempt to drive away a pregnant worker.

Finally, stop fighting Obamacare. In the words of Charles Camosy, a Christian ethicist, the Affordable Care Act is “the most important development since 1992” in alleviating burdens on pregnant women. Not only does it provide expanded health benefits for poor women, but it also has been proved to decrease the uninsured rate. What difference does it make if a child is born if it dies of an asthma attack for lack of the money needed for an inhaler? The statistics show that many poor women worry about being unable to provide a good life for their child. Telling expectant mothers that their children will be uninsured—and thus might not be able to obtain adequate health care—is certainly a pressure that could lead a woman to choose an abortion.

Many anti-abortion advocates who also oppose Obamacare apparently don’t know what’s in it: The law includes provisions of the Pregnant Women Support Act, which these activists pushed for many years. It increases the tax credit for adoption, requires insurers to cover prenatal care, makes grant money available to the states for pregnancy counseling and home visits by nurses, and establishes an array of other benefits designed to help pregnant women.

These sensible and humane steps won’t stop all abortions. The complex balance between a woman’s autonomy and a fetus’s chance at life poses an unresolvable question, one where both sides of the moral equation must be respected. But these measures would guarantee that fewer women would be forced by financial pressures to seek an abortion, giving them true freedom of choice. The plan’s not perfect, but it’s better than what we have. And if either side whines about higher taxes—or if anti-abortion activists refuse to adopt babies who otherwise might have been aborted—at least we will finally know that their years of protests have been a charade. ■



THE ABANDONED HOUSE

BY RACHEL NUWER (@RACHELNUWER)



STREET LIFE: Some of the homeless cats that Mohammad Alaa Aljaleel (not pictured) feeds every day in the city of Aleppo.

CATS OF ALEPPO

**WHO SAVES THE ANIMALS SUFFERING
AND DYING IN SYRIA'S WAR ZONE?**



EACH MORNING,

Mohammad Alaa Aljaleel drives to the local butcher shop and purchases \$2.50 worth of scraps. On good days, the sympathetic proprietor will give Aljaleel a discount or even throw in some bits and bones for free. Along with everyone else in this part of Aleppo, Syria, the butcher knows Aljaleel isn't purchasing the meat for himself but for 150 street cats—most of them former pets abandoned when their owners fled the city or were killed.

In the years since the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011, Aljaleel has become his hometown's unofficial feline caretaker. Shortly after the crisis began, the former electrician had an opportunity to take his wife and

three children to Turkey, where he had prospects of working as a mechanic. But along with his family, he chose to stay behind to help those less fortunate than himself. For Aljaleel, that includes not just people but also animals. "I regard animals and humans in the same light," he says. "All of them suffer pain, and all of them deserve compassion."

A lifelong cat lover, Aljaleel first



ADRIFT: Above, refugees from Syria and Iraq disembark on the Greek island of Lesbos. Right, Aljaleel with some of the abandoned cats he feeds daily.

noticed a few strays hanging around the rubble of a home destroyed by an airstrike. He felt compelled to feed them. Soon five animals turned into 10, then 20—as he says, “cats always find out when there’s food around”—and on up until the colony reached the estimated 150 that he watches over today. Thirty of the cats now have names, including his favorite, Zorro the Noble,

SOME SYRIAN REFUGEES HAVE WALKED OVER 300 MILES WITH THEIR DOGS OR TAKEN KITTENS ABOARD RAFTS BOUND FOR GREECE.

and children from other parts of the city come to visit the homeless pets, many of which are still very friendly. “It brings the kids so much joy to play with them,” Aljaleel says. “I take great pride in the work I’m doing.”

Some might argue that Aljaleel’s time and resources would be better spent aiding human victims of war. But the scant few individuals and organizations that work with pets and other animals caught up in conflict zones firmly believe their efforts are worthwhile. Helping animals, they point out, helps people. Farmers’ livelihoods may be wrapped up in their livestock, while cats and dogs are often beloved members of the family. Some Syrian refugees have walked over 300 miles with their dogs or taken kittens aboard rafts bound for Greece.

“The reality is that people do not want to evacuate without their pets,” says Gerardo Huertas, director of disaster management operations at World Animal Protection, a nonprofit focused on improving animal welfare. “In questionnaires we’ve carried out asking people what they would take with them if they had to leave their homes, cats and dogs are always on the top of the list.”

Inevitably, though, animals are left behind. When that happens, they often face a slow death by starvation, injury or disease. Huertas was introduced to this harsh reality in 1989, during the blood-soaked Nicaraguan Revolution. Desperate Nicaraguans were flooding across the border into Costa Rica, but the last 100 yards of the frontier were laced with land



mines. Discovering this, some refugees tied their cattle and horses to trees, thinking their chances would be better if they made their way through the field on their own. They likely intended to come back for the animals at some point, but in effect those horses and cattle were left to starve.

When Huertas, who is from Costa Rica, heard about the situation on the news, he felt compelled to do something, despite the danger. "I was young and stupid," he says. So he and a friend headed to the scrubby borderland, where they retraced the path the refugees had taken, all the while praying not to get blown up themselves. Soon, they found the emaciated animals; in their desperation, they had eaten the bark off of the trees they were tied to. Some were dead. Huertas and his friend roped up the survivors into a single-file line and began the treacherous journey back to Costa Rica. Somehow, the two men and all of the animals made it through without stepping on a mine. Huertas has gone on to aid conflict animals all over the world. He's treated livestock suffering from tuberculosis in Kosovo just a month after the 1999 cease-fire, and he has spent time in Kabul, Afghanistan, saving starving zoo animals and tending to camels injured by shrapnel. Farmers, especially, welcomed Huertas and his colleagues as heroes. "People have no future without their animals," he says.

These animal-aid missions often include a second goal: limiting the dangers that once-domesticated animals turned wild can pose to humans. During the war in Kosovo, stray sheepdogs banded together into packs that soon became feral. "They can be aggressive if they're hungry," Huertas says. "We had to round up a lot of those animals."

Feral dogs and cats can also spread rabies—a chronic problem in Afghanistan, where an estimated 1,000 people die each year because of bites from infected canines. "In the last few months, 12 people died of rabies in the outskirts of Kabul alone," says Pen Farthing, founder and CEO of Nowzad, a nonprofit organization that runs the only official animal charity in Afghanistan. To combat the disease, Nowzad practices trap-neuter-release, harmlessly capturing feral animals, "fixing" them and vaccinating them for rabies, and then returning them to the street. Though the process is a logistical nightmare, simply euthanizing stray dogs would not work, Farthing says, because Kabul has too many of these extremely territorial animals; if some were eliminated, others would immediately move in.

Unfortunately, Nowzad's Kabul clinic and World Animal Protection's global operations are exceptional examples among conflict-torn areas. Very few nonprofits operate in places plagued with violence, primarily because of the danger such settings pose to human rescuers. Farthing, a former Royal Marine commando, has had to deal with improvised explosive devices planted outside the animal shelter (intended for Afghan army vehicles), and one of the nonprofit's drivers once passed through an area

that the Taliban attacked five minutes later. Soldiers stopped Huertas and his colleagues at gunpoint in Kosovo and, according to their translator, began deliberating about whether or not they should shoot the foreigners.

Safety aside, logistics for animal rescue in such places can also be daunting. Aid workers must bring along enough veterinary supplies and food to restock local clinics and get shelters up and running, along with oddball equipment like



SICK AS A DOG: In some cases, abandoned animals become human health hazards. In Afghanistan (right), authorities had to euthanize hundreds of rabies-stricken dogs with no owners.

dart guns for catching aggressive dogs and humane euthanasia devices to give to slaughterhouses. "Just to put one of those things on a plane is a big deal," Huertas says. "Explosive cartridges and drugs are the biggest no-nos for airlines."

Nowzad regularly attempts an even greater logistical feat, however: sending dogs and cats from the Middle East to the U.S. or Europe. When Farthing was sta-

tioned in Afghanistan, he once stopped a dogfight that some Afghan policemen had instigated. To his surprise, he says, "One of those dogs decided to adopt me." The town where that occurred, called Nowzad, served as inspiration for both his new pet's name and his future charity. When he left the country in 2007, he brought Nowzad the dog back with him to the U.K. However, he found that doing so was a significant challenge. The dog needed the proper vaccinations,

"IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, 12 PEOPLE DIED OF RABIES IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF KABUL."

tant to part with when their tour of duty concludes—but they also are not able to manage jumping through all the hoops to get the pets safely home. So far, Nowzad has reunited 800 soldiers with their animals from Afghanistan and 40 with theirs from Iraq. War Dogs Making It Home, a charity in Chicago that trains rescued dogs as service animals and pairs them with

combat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or mobility issues, has also brought six Nowzad dogs to the U.S. Those animals, however, are the exceptionally lucky ones. Most suffer fates like that of J-bad, a mortally wounded Afghan dog that rescuers found in 2014.

That year, Dan Tatsch, a five-time Nowzad volunteer from Dallas and former U.S. Army captain, was on his way to the Kabul airport to catch a flight home when a call came through from a Canadian logistics contractor. The woman had spotted a crippled dog dragging itself by its front legs along a dangerous stretch of highway called Jalalabad Road. Tatsch, Farthing and the other Nowzad team members in the van had enough time before Tatsch's flight to make a detour, and they quickly located the dog. "It was a once-magnificent example of the Kuchi herding breed, well over 100 pounds in his prime, but now a sad, broken shell of his former self," Tatsch recalls. The team scooped up the dog, whose hind legs were paralyzed—likely from a broken

back—and covered in open sores from being dragged across the ground. They named him J-bad after the road he was found on; the injured dog slept for most of the van ride back to headquarters, head in Tatsch's lap. But saving J-bad's life, they knew, was out of the question; the damage was simply too great. Back at the Nowzad headquarters, the best they could provide was final meal and then a comfortable end to his suffering.

As for the cats of Aleppo, their future is uncertain—as is Aljaleel's. "Every day, when I leave my house, I know I might not return," he says. "In Syria, it's only going from bad to worse." Yet despite the escalating violence, he has no plans to leave or give up on the cats. Instead, like Farthing in Afghanistan, he has aspirations of opening his own animal shelter and hospital.

"I'm aware that other countries have lots more resources for animals, but here we don't even have many good doctors, let alone veterinarians," he says. "Although there is no such thing as animal shelters in Syria now, I dream of building one." **N**



provided by a qualified vet, to meet the health requirements of the new country; Farthing needed to find a facility where the animal could stay during its quarantine period before it got those vaccines; the dog needed a way to actually make the journey, on either a commercial flight or a cargo plane; and Farthing had to manage the paperwork and permissions needed to bring an animal from Afghanistan to the U.K.

Farthing's situation is not out of the ordinary. Soldiers stationed abroad often defy army regulations and adopt local animals, which they are reluc-

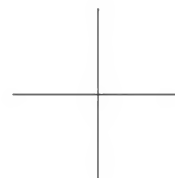


JEFFREY MACHICEN, CORNELL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

+
**OFF LEASH DOG
BREEDING GOES:**
IVF has important
applications for vets,
who can birth pups
from dogs that can't
naturally breed.



NEW WORLD



CLIMATE

INNOVATION

AGING

MARIJUANA

SPACE

ENVIRONMENT

GOOD SCIENCE

DOG DAYS OF SCIENCE

For the first time, puppies were born using in vitro fertilization

IN JUST ABOUT every domestic animal, scientists have been able to create offspring using in vitro fertilization (IVF). But not dogs.

Scientists have been trying for decades, but canine sperm is quite finicky, explains Alex Travis, at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. If you try to fertilize an egg with them directly, it won't work—they need to incubate and develop in the reproductive tract of a female before becoming capable of fertilization. So Jennifer Nagashima, another researcher on the project, looked through decades of research on dog sperm to figure out how to re-create that environment in the lab. Her hypothesis: magnesium.

The team tried incubating sperm for several hours in a solution with magnesium and other chemicals produced in a dog's fallopian tubes, and then they combined it with mature dog eggs. It was a success, resulting in 19 embryos from three different pairings—two from beagle parents and one from a cocker spaniel and a beagle, which they later implanted into a hound mix. The end result: the first seven healthy IVF puppies.

The findings come with a lot of potential applications. For example, having a fertilized embryo in the lab allows researchers to genetically manipulate it. This could have tremendous applications since dogs share a number of genetic diseases with humans, such as various types of cancer and diabetes. Successful treatment of these conditions in dogs could help lead to better treatments in people, Travis says. The advance also has exciting potential in conservation biology says Pierre Comizzoli, at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Many canine species—like red wolves and African wild dogs—are endangered, and this technique could be used in the future to breed more of them or correct genetic defects.

It's a "major breakthrough," says Ann Van Soom, at Ghent University, but more work will be needed to improve the method before it's ready for practical or clinical applications. Nagashima is on it: Now at the Smithsonian institute, she is currently trying to enhance the process so scientists will be able to develop viable offspring from young or even recently deceased animals. **N**

BY
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DISRUPTIVE

STAR WARS CLASS WARS

Will Mars become an escape hatch for the 1 percent?

THE WORLD SUCKS right now. Terrorism. Climate change. Political acrimony. Nonstop Justin Bieber songs. It's nice to know Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos have a plan. They will help the richest people in the world go to Mars and start over, leaving the other 99 percent to suffer on a dying, warring planet. The only solace for those of us left here will be that the Biebs should be prosperous enough to go with them.

This is the flip side of Musk's SpaceX and Bezos's Blue Origin. The space travel companies say they're creating a way for the human species to endure by populating other planets. But only the wealthy will have the means to move to Mars. Musk's target ticket price is \$500,000 a person, and that's just to get there. Imagine the new outfits you'll have to buy to go with that space helmet.

So you can picture a scenario that's something like the 1970s white flight from inner cities, when the wealthier classes moved to freshly built suburbs, leaving the declining neighborhoods to the lower classes. In fact, the fleeing upper classes sped up the decrepitude of older cities by relocating their money and clout with them. Today, we're seeing a similar situation in Syria, as the wealthiest and most educated people escape to the West, which will make the country even harder to stabilize and rebuild.

Such a dynamic could apply to the whole world in about 40 years. Maybe historians charting Earth's degeneration will trace a direct link back to this month's climate talks in Paris. Couldn't make a deal stick, they'll say. Environment spun

out of control. Drought. Upheaval. Anarchy. And then Wall Street bankers, tech titans, CEOs and Jay Z's entourage decided to get the hell out and build McMansions in Martian space bubbles.

All this might sound crazy—except it's not. Last month, Blue Origin advanced space flight by another important notch. The secretive company launched a rocket 62 miles into space and then landed it upright, like you might see in a sci-fi movie, just a few feet from the rocket's launchpad. It's a step toward making reusable rockets, and reusable rockets are absolutely essential to getting the cost of a Mars flight low enough to expand the target market beyond the *Forbes* 400.

For comparison's sake, NASA space shuttle missions cost about \$200 million per astronaut, and those flights went only into orbit. Compared with going to Mars, orbit is like putting a toe in the Atlantic versus sailing from Europe to the New World. And the shuttle, by the way, was not a reusable rocket—it was a reusable passenger compartment. No one had previously made a reusable rocket, which is a big reason space cost so much. The economics were as bad as if you had to buy a new engine for every car trip.

Blue Origin is now ginning up a real space race with SpaceX, which will help drive innovation and lower costs. Musk got a head start and has guided SpaceX into the business of launching satellites as a way to practice for human space travel. Bezos opened Blue Origin—a little side project when he's not running Amazon.com—specifically to carry people to other planets, and it got its



BY
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first rocket off the ground in April. Also in the mix are Richard Branson with his Virgin Galactic and Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, who funded the nerdily named Stratolaunch Systems. Space is turning into a billionaire-athon. If Donald Trump doesn't become president, you just know there has to be a Trump Spaceship in his future.

Of course, launching a few rockets and saying you're going to Mars is like writing a haiku and saying you're the next John Updike. But these guys are serious. "Our ultimate vision is millions of people living and working in space," Bezos told reporters after the Blue Origin landing. Musk makes even grander statements. "We need to be laser-focused on becoming a multi-planet civilization," he's said. "That's the next step."

In some circles, Mars colonies are a real possibility. Some writers and scientists think the first brave souls will make the six-month journey within 10 years, and that's Musk's prediction. Once the technology is proven, regular flights of supplies and people will begin. The pioneers will

have to build habitable indoor spaces and, later, domed communities. As this year's hit movie *The Martian* showed us, once on Mars it's possible to grow food, make breathable air and harvest energy from solar panels. Musk calls Mars "a fixer-upper of a planet," but by 2040, he says, there should be a thriving colonial Martiantown.

That time frame is sobering—just 25 years from now. The real migration will start post-2040. Volume will drive down flight prices from tens of millions of dollars a person to \$500,000. People will start companies on Mars. They'll take their families. "It's not going to be a vacation jaunt," Musk said in interviews. "It's going to be saving up all your money and selling all your stuff, like when people moved to the early American colonies." His goal, which he believes is achievable, is to get Mars up to a population of 1 million, which Musk says "is the critical threshold for us as a civilization to not join the potentially large number of one-planet dead civilizations out there."

And that gets to the point about who goes and why. Some will go seeking opportunity, but many will go for self-preservation. The sad calculus is that Mars looks better the worse things get on Earth. And if that's the case, it's actually not like moving from Europe to the American colonies

"IT'S NOT GOING TO BE A VACATION JAUNT. IT'LL BE LIKE WHEN PEOPLE MOVED TO THE EARLY AMERICAN COLONIES."

in the 1700s. It sounds more like escaping a ravaged land to go somewhere safe and start over.

Who will do that? The cost of decamping to another planet will be too high for all but the super-rich. Where will these wealthy people come from? Most of the space travel companies are American. What if they take mostly Americans? Will we start a human colony on Mars or an American colony?

Maybe later Mars will rebel and sign its Declaration of Independence from Earth. Maybe it will shut its borders and refuse any more refugees from that hot, horrible, hungry origin planet. We're the exceptional people, the Martians might say, and all of you Earthlings just keep screwing up your home, so we don't want you.

They might even send Bieber back. Wouldn't that teach us a lesson? **M**

UNREAL ESTATE:
Musk says Mars isn't
the friendliest place
to live; he calls it a
"fixer-upper planet."

ANDREW RICH/VETTA/GETTY



HOLY LAND SMOKES

How Israel became America's offshore marijuana research facility

IN 1964, Raphael Mechoulam rode a public bus from Tel Aviv back to his lab at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot while holding 11 pounds of Lebanese hashish in a plastic bag. He received his giant stash—the first of many over the next 50 years—from a police officer who had confiscated it from smugglers. “Advantages of living in a small country,” the chemist, now 85, says with a mischievous smirk.

That hashish turned out to be a gift to science and modern medicine. A few months later, Mechoulam used it to, for the first time in history, isolate, elucidate the structure of and fully synthesize tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis. Scientists knew that marijuana got you high but had struggled for decades to figure out exactly how. Mechoulam and his colleagues were also the first to decode the exact structure of cannabidiol (CBD), the primary nonpsychoactive component of marijuana, and the first to test the medicinal properties of THC. Today, thousands of children around the world receive THC drops to cope with cancer and epilepsy.

“While morphine had been isolated from opium 150 years previously, and cocaine had been isolated 100 years previously, the chemistry of cannabis was unknown,” says Mechoulam. To determine the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, Mechoulam became his own test subject. To begin, he and his team identified several compounds in the plant, including THC and CBD, and injected them into monkeys. THC

was the only compound that elicited a reaction from the monkeys, most often drowsiness. “A few months later, we tested it on humans, on ourselves,” says Mechoulam. “We had a group of 10 friends, including my wife and I. Half of us took THC, sprinkled on a piece of cake, and half took the piece of cake without anything else.” Everyone who ate the THC-laced desserts had some type of reaction. Bingo. Mechoulam got a normal slice of cake, but his wife’s was covered in THC. “My wife just sat there, relaxing, kind of in another world,” recalls Mechoulam. “Another fellow didn’t stop talking for an hour or two. One of them said he didn’t feel anything, but every minute he would start laughing his head off.”

Mechoulam, a child of the Holocaust who was born in Bulgaria in 1930 and emigrated to Israel in 1949, had originally planned to spend just six months researching cannabis. Today, he’s still at it and is one of the most widely published authorities on one of the world’s most popular plants. His work has transformed the Holy Land into the birthplace of not only Judaism and Christianity but also the modern medical marijuana industry.

In 1992, Mechoulam and his team at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University made another groundbreaking discovery. Nearly 30 years after discovering that THC was responsible for the marijuana high, scientists still didn’t know exactly how the plant made the human mind and body react that way. Mechoulam and his team found the answer: THC triggered what they called the endocannabinoid



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LEGAL DOSES: Measured portions of all sorts of medical marijuana-laced goods—chocolate, a cookie, drops, a biscuit, toffee and a flower—on display at a counseling center in Tel Aviv, Israel.

system, which they figured out was the largest receptor system in the human body. Mechoulam's team also determined that the human brain produces its own cannabinoids—two compounds that stimulate this receptor system almost exactly as THC does. They named one molecule 2AG and the other “anandamide,” after the Sanskrit word *ananda*, which means “bliss.” Mechoulam and other influential researchers believe that these compounds could alleviate dozens of diseases and ailments, including schizophrenia, diabetes, cancer, eating disorders, brain injuries and neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis. However, scientists have not yet been able to secure the funding they need to satisfy the conditions (typically set forth by each country's health regulator) required to test the chemical on humans.

Nevertheless, the discovery of this endogenous cannabinoid system has revolutionized weed science. “We wouldn't have the scientific interest we have now around the world without the discovery,” says Paul Armentano, deputy director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, an American nonprofit. “That really opened the door to making the study of cannabis and cannabinoids a legitimate avenue.” Since 1992, says Mechoulam, the formerly skeptical attitude of the medical community toward cannabis has changed completely. His research on anandamide, for example, has been cited in respected scientific journals some 4,000 times. In fact, a recent study conducted by the U.S.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that the endocannabinoid system is involved in essentially every human disease. Indeed, the fact that medical marijuana is legal in dozens of U.S. states is a result of this discovery.

Still, Israel is one of just three nations in the world with a government-sponsored cannabis program, joined by Canada and the Netherlands. There is even a Medical Cannabis Unit within the Israeli Ministry of Health. Eight private companies are permitted by the government to produce and distribute the drug to the country's 25,000 licensed medical marijuana patients. Cannabis can be prescribed for many conditions, including cancer, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, arthritis, pediatric epilepsy and Crohn's disease. Patients can get their medicine in the form of cigarettes, baked goods, balms, liquid drops and buds, which they can roll into cigarettes or smoke out of a pipe or vaporizer. They can even get cannabis delivered to their home.

Israel has also become the United States's unofficial offshore medical marijuana research center. Despite the fact that the U.S. has a \$3 billion—and growing—medical marijuana industry, the government continues to block scientific study of the drug. In the U.S., medical marijuana is legal in 23 states and Washington, D.C., but the Drug Enforcement Administration still labels it as a Schedule I narcotic, “with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.” That's the same classification as heroin and sup-

“ONE SUBJECT SAID HE DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING, BUT EVERY MINUTE HE WOULD START LAUGHING HIS HEAD OFF.”

posedly makes it more dangerous than cocaine and methamphetamine, Schedule II drugs. This policy makes conducting research into the medical benefits of marijuana in the U.S. notoriously difficult. Those who wish to do so must go through the FDA, DEA and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Even when American researchers are given approval for federally funded research, they have only one source: a farm at the University of Mississippi, operated by NIDA.

That's why American companies are turning to



Israeli researchers and organizations. Mechoulam, for example, works with three U.S. companies developing cannabinoid drugs. One of them is Kalytera, a California-based company for which he serves as the head of research. Even the U.S. government relies on Israel for its medical marijuana exploration. The NIH, which rarely provides overseas grants, has been funding Mechoulam's research for 50 years. It started in 1963, when Mechoulam applied for NIH funding and was told that cannabis research wasn't of interest to the agency because marijuana wasn't an "American problem," recalls Mechoulam. "They told me to let them know when I have something more relevant to the U.S." A year later, Mechoulam received another call from the same official. A U.S. senator, whose name was withheld from Mechoulam, had caught his son smoking weed. The senator had asked the NIH what effect the drug might have on his son's brain. To the embarrassment of America's top public health agency, no one could answer the question; there was no research on file. The NIH official asked Mechoulam if he was still working on cannabis. Today, the NIH gives Mechoulam's team approximately \$100,000 per year to study, for example, how cannabinoids can lower human resistance to antibiotics.

Meanwhile, Cannabics, a Maryland-based company that conducts all of its R&D in Israel, is using the Middle Eastern country as a testing ground for the world's first large-scale clinical trial of cannabis to treat cancer patients. Medical marijuana is already widely used to manage the pain and nausea that come as side effects to chemo and radiation therapy, but many medical scientists believe there are compounds in the marijuana plant that could kill cancer itself. Eyal Ballan, the Israeli co-founder and chief scientist at Cannabics, established the company in the U.S. because it represents an exponentially larger market than will ever be found among Israel's 8 million residents. He chose to keep all of the company's research and clinical trials in Israel, though, because "it's essentially impos-

sible to do it in the U.S.," he says. "The doctors, scientists and the government are much more open-minded [in Israel]."

Leaders in the American medical marijuana community hope the U.S. will learn something from Israel. "Marijuana was an integral part of American medicine for more than 100 years, from the 1830s through the 1940s, and it was used safely and effectively for all of that time," says Dr. Alan Shackelford, a Harvard-trained physician who prescribes medical marijuana in Colorado. But today, bipartisan legislation (the Compassionate Access, Research Expansion and Respect States Act) meant to reclassify marijuana as a Schedule II drug remains stalled in Congress, "not for any scientific reason but pretty much out of ignorance of what is actually intended, which is to allow scientific inquiry and study," Shackelford says.

THESE COMPOUNDS COULD ALLEVIATE SCHIZOPHRENIA, DIABETES, CANCER, EATING DISORDERS, AND NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES.

Having seen the clear medical benefits of cannabis over more than 50 years of research, Mechoulam is baffled that there's still reluctance to embrace marijuana as medicine. "We believe modern science is going ahead, right?" he asks. "Well, it's not. When insulin was discovered in the 1920s, it became a drug in months. Cortisone was discovered in the late 1940s, and it was made into a drug a year or two later. Anandamide was discovered 23 years ago and has still never been administered to a human being. I'm not sure that's progress." ■



THE STONED OLD AGE: Holocaust survivor Moshe Roth, 81, a writer and painter born in Nancy, France, relaxes after smoking medical marijuana in the Hadarim nursing home near Rehovot, Israel.

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YOUTH MUST NOT BE SERVED

Big Pharma is reluctant to test a cheap, generic diabetes pill that could be the fountain of youth

IN A SLEW OF recent flashy endeavors, scientists, academics and exceptionally rich people have taken on the aging process. In 2013, Google launched Calico, its billion-dollar anti-aging research and development arm, which the following year formed a partnership with pharmaceutical giant AbbVie. Meanwhile, another major drug company, Novartis, is developing a patentable form of rapamycin—a biological agent discovered in the soil on Easter Island—which has been shown to boost immune function, and the company hopes it could become the first viable anti-aging pill.

But, according to Dr. Nir Barzilai at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, we might already have the drug we need to slow the aging process—and it's dirt cheap. Metformin is an old, generic diabetes drug, known for its blood sugar-lowering properties. It's common, and it costs about 35 cents per pill. It's also been found to stall the aging process in animal studies.

In June, Barzilai, along with academics from the not-for-profit American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), approached the Food and Drug Administration with an idea: the Targeting Aging With Metformin (TAME) study, to see if metformin could do for humans what it does for animals. It would be the first clinical trial to test if a drug could slow human aging. The FDA said yes, and since that June meeting the media has exploded with excitement over the purported

"fountain of youth" drug, with rumors that it could extend human life span up to 120 years.

The problem, though, is that no one has agreed to front the capital required to get TAME off the ground. That's not surprising: There are plenty of reasons Big Pharma won't fund a study that would make a cheaply available, common drug the must-have for the 21st century. Pharmaceutical companies spend big money on drug research and development to bring products to market because they get several years of exclusive marketing rights for any new drug. This guaranteed temporary monopoly in the drug market can be a massive windfall. A pharma company could test generic metformin in clinical trials, get it approved and market it for something *other* than diabetes—and that company would be the only one allowed to do so during the patent period. For that to happen, though, the FDA would have to do something it's never done: approve an anti-aging indication for a drug. In large part, that's because there's little agreement in the scientific community on what biomarkers are quantifiably associated with aging. And the idea of testing a drug to see if it helps lower risk for a battery of ailments directly conflicts the standard model that clinical trials have followed for years: one drug, one disease.

That's why, to some extent, what matters most about TAME is not that it proves metformin works—it's that, if it gets off the ground,

BY
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it will be proof-of-concept for future studies. “We’re doing this study to convince the FDA that aging can be targeted,” Barzilai says. “I do think delaying aging can be done within the next decade.” If metformin ends up working, great. If it doesn’t, then the next drug tested for its anti-aging properties—or the one after that—will.

TAME will recruit approximately 3,000 elderly people; half will receive metformin and half will be given a placebo. The drug’s success will be gauged by its ability to delay the onset of afflictions associated with the aging process: cardiovascular disease, cancer and cognitive decline. Because the TAME study targets diseases associated with aging rather than the number of years a person lives, it is technically about extending “health spans”: making the years at the end of a person’s life healthier. The upshot could be longer lives—healthier bodies tend to stick around longer.

If TAME is successful, it could upend the pharmaceutical business. “The vast majority of older adults have multiple chronic conditions,” says Dr. Mary Tinetti, a professor of geriatrics at Yale University. FDA approval of metformin as an anti-aging medication “would encourage investigators to look

at treatments that affect multiple conditions.” That matters because most elderly people typically face numerous health issues and require a plethora of pills. A person with both diabetes and heart disease, for example, might be taking a daily anti-diabetic agent, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory, beta blocker and statin. If metformin—or some other single, cheap drug—can target multiple comorbidities in aging

THERE’S LITTLE AGREEMENT IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ON WHAT BIOMARKERS ARE QUANTIFIABLY ASSOCIATED WITH AGING.

ONE DRUG TO RULE THEM ALL: The notion that a single medication could replace a battery of treatments for age-related illnesses would be a financial and health boon for elderly patients.

SERGII TRYAPITSYN/ALAMY



populations, it would significantly reduce the number of medications people need to take. Replacing all those with one would save patients money but would also cut deeply into pharmaceutical companies’ bottom lines.

The TAME study could pave the way for more extensive aging studies. When aging becomes a viable target for pharma companies, that will encourage exponentially greater research in the field and hopefully result in new insights into the correlation between aging and chronic disease, explains Stephanie Lederman, the director of AFAR. This has the potential to be the space where Big Pharma could make the money it craves.

But to get this all going, someone’s going to have to put up some initial funding. The TAME study is projected to cost about \$65 million. Without the backing of a major corporation, it might be a long time before Barzilai and his colleagues have the necessary resources to move TAME forward.

If it gets going, there will be a lot riding on TAME. The last time a leading drug company spent big bucks on anti-aging, they regretted it: In 2008, GlaxoSmithKline invested \$720 million in a biotech startup developing drugs based on resveratrol, a compound found in red wine that appeared to increase life span in animal studies. The drug bombed in clinical trials, and GSK closed down the operation. If TAME gets off the ground but fails to produce the desired results, it’ll mean another big miss for anti-aging studies and could further discourage Big Pharma from hurrying back into the field. **N**





DOWNTIME

GIFTS

TOYS

TELEVISION

ART

MOVIES

BOOKS

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BARBIE

There's more than cybersecurity at risk when a doll records a kid's playtime

+
SPARKLE AND FADE: A new Barbie toy from Mattel, Hello Barbie, is a kid's best friend—using voice recognition software and a Wi-Fi connection, she can talk, respond and listen. But who else could potentially hear the conversation?

IN THE early 1960s, toymaker Mattel dreamed up Chatty Cathy—a pull-string talking doll that dazzled children with a few simple phrases, like “I love you!” and “Let’s play house!” She quickly schmoozed her way onto the holiday gift wish list of a million little girls. In 2015, Mattel is looking to save its struggling, 56-year-old Barbie brand with Chatty Cathy’s even chattier cousin, Hello Barbie. Except this doll doesn’t just talk; she empathizes and listens—and it’s making parents, cybersecurity advocates and child psychiatrists nervous.

It’s hard to tell from looking at her, but the latest Barbie is one of the most technologically advanced toys ever made. Her trendy outfit—a cropped metallic jacket and skinny jeans—conceals her electronic innards from her target 6- to 8-year-old demographic. Barbie’s stylish necklace cloaks both a microphone and a speaker, enabling her to engage in two-way conversations, tell stories, play games and joke around. Her legs are slightly thicker than those of regular Barbies, to hold two rechargeable batteries, while the small of her back hosts a tiny USB port for charging.

To confide in Barbie, all a child must do is press a hold-to-talk button on the doll’s belt buckle.

Before the chatting can begin, parents must download a mobile application and connect Barbie to a wireless network. When a child speaks to the doll, a recording of their conversation is transmitted over the Wi-Fi connection to the servers of ToyTalk, a San Francisco-based startup that Mattel partnered with to bring Barbie to life. Speech recognition software converts the audio into text, and artificial intelligence software extracts keywords from the child’s responses, triggering Barbie to reply with one of the 8,000 lines handcrafted by a team of writers.

What’s more, Barbie remembers every detail, building a cloud database of her owner’s likes and dislikes, which she can incorporate into future conversations. If a child tells Barbie that he or she has two mothers, for example, Barbie is equipped to say later on, “What’s something really special about your moms? What do you like to do together?” Pretty nifty. But buyers be warned: Barbie doesn’t keep secrets.

BY

LAUREN WALKER

[@laserlauren](#)



Keywords plucked from a child's responses to Barbie are funneled into a "trend bucket," showing Mattel and ToyTalk which topics are most popular with their little customers at any given time. The data provides the creators with ideas for how to improve the product for the spring season, such as which lines they should add to Barbie's response repository. So if the company notices a surge of kids mentioning Taylor Swift, Barbie may have some thoughts on the singer-songwriter a few weeks later.

Asked by *Newsweek* whether the stored material would be used for other purposes, Mattel spokeswoman Michelle Chidoni responds carefully: "We will not use the information to make other product decisions within the Barbie line." That leaves open the possibility of using the data for other toy lines, and, according to ToyTalk's privacy policy, "third-party vendors" can also capitalize on the data for "research and development purposes."

Child privacy advocates don't like what they're hearing. "They really shouldn't call it Hello Barbie; they should call it Surveillance Barbie," Susan Linn, founding director of Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC), told *Newsweek* in March. The nonprofit launched a "Hell No Barbie" campaign that month with the hope of shutting down the product. "Kids talking to Hello Barbie aren't just talking to a doll; they're talking to Mattel...a multinational corporation whose only interest in them is financial."

THE HACKERS' DIGITAL HAUL CONTAINED THOUSANDS OF PICTURES OF THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS.

Chidoni says critics have it all wrong. "It's not a surveillance device. There's not a camera in the doll," she says. "And the doll isn't always listening to your conversation; she has to be activated." Besides, she adds, "we are putting all of the data into the hands of the parents."

And indeed, parents can log in to their account and deny ToyTalk access to part or all of what their children say. "If there is something your child says that you don't want on our servers, you hit the trash can, and it is gone in seconds... from all servers," ToyTalk CEO and co-founder Oren Jacob says. "Parents can also delete all and turn off [recordings]." But there is an incentive not to: By granting the company permission to hold on to the information, parents can access audio files of their child's conversations with Barbie. The recordings are carved up into strings of couplets—what Barbie says and the child's response. Parents can play, delete or

+ A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND: Girls use computers at the Barbie Dreamhouse Experience in Berlin. Some psychologists are concerned about how children interact with new technology and its privacy issues.

share the exchange by pushing it to Facebook or Twitter, or by emailing it to Grandma.

While full control may sound like soothing music to parents' ears, it has child psychiatrists worried. "We learn a lot about a child's anger and their family life based on how they play and what is talked about during child's play," says Dr. Judith Fiona Joseph, a child and adolescent psychiatrist with a practice in New York City. "You can learn a lot about what your child observes." Sexual or violent movie scenes, for instance, may make their way into play sessions. "Parents must be very prepared for what they may learn about their children through the recordings," she says.

But the CCFC also fears that hackers—tempted by Barbie's iconic name and massive network—will make some discoveries of their own. Cybercriminals have a fondness for pilaging financial data, but they've also shown they're not averse to stealing what is seemingly less lucrative, like a child's personal information. In late November, hackers ransacked the servers of VTech, a Chinese company that sells a variety of electronic toys, scooping up nearly 5 million parents' names, email addresses, passwords and home addresses, and up to 200,000 kids' first names, genders and birthdays. Worse, the hackers' digital haul contained thousands of pictures of the children and their parents, as well as text and audio chat logs between them.

ToyTalk says it has taken precautions to prevent cyberattacks. It has minimized the collected data to parents' email addresses and a child's chatter, and secured the connections between the doll and servers. The company also ensures that nothing is stored in the doll other than the parents' chosen Wi-Fi networks. "So if a child happens to lose the doll," says ToyTalk's Jacob, "nothing of the child's data is lost at all."

In response to the mounting criticisms, including Barbie's technological vulnerabilities, Chidoni admits that "because she is Barbie, she has a target on her back."

Clearly, Barbie's creators know what they're doing—they've turned their little celebrity into a global toy empire. But that doesn't mean she's immune to controversy. Upon her introduction to the world at the New York Toy Fair in 1959, the unrealistically slim-yet-busty children's toy instantly caught the ire of mothers. "I don't like that influence on my little girl," one mother reportedly said. "It's hard enough to raise a lady these days without undue moral pressures." And as the Barbie brand grew, so did the criticism surrounding it.

In 1992, Mattel gave a voice to an earlier version of Hello Barbie called Teen Talk Barbie,



which spoke whenever someone pushed a button on the back of her neck. Lines like "Will we ever have enough clothes?" and "I love shopping!" irked feminists, but "Math class is tough" enraged the American Association of University Women. "Preteen girls most likely to play with Teen Talk Barbie are at the highest risk for losing confidence in their math ability," then-AAUW President Sharon Schuster announced. The organization demanded that Mattel recall the doll. The company deleted the offensive clips and apologized.

This time, Mattel is confident that Barbie is a positive influence. "The value that Mattel and ToyTalk have put on what comes out of Barbie's mouth is insane," says Chidoni. "It doesn't mean that we aren't going to make a mistake, but it does mean that we are doing everything possible that we can to ensure that...we've thought of every possible angle."

How did Mattel respond to the latest security and well-being concerns? "We didn't change anything," says Chidoni, "because there was nothing that needed to be changed."

Parents who are already in the habit of recording their children doing "the darndest things" and sharing it on social media may agree. To them, Hello Barbie's technology may blend in with the Siris and Cortanas already in their lives. But child psychiatrists *Newsweek* interviewed predict that many parents won't tell their children about the doll's recording capabilities to ensure authentic responses. Parents who do so, the psychiatrists warn, have no idea what they are in for.

Dr. Kevin Kalikow, a child and adolescent psychiatrist in New York City, says that if or when children discover their parents' Barbie betrayal, the results will not be pretty in pink. The immediate effect may be resentment, he says, especially if a secret is made public. There may also be a kind of chilling effect, he says: Children may begin to self-censor, bottling their thoughts as they learn that Mommy or Daddy may share online whatever they tell their doll. If a child learns that everything may inevitably become public, says Kalikow, it may have a "pervasive influence on how the child sees the world." ■



THE OTHER WAR ON CHRISTMAS

From conveniently idiotic to insultingly insipid, here are some of the worst holiday movies ever made

EVERY YEAR, people bemoan the commercialization of the holiday season—the push on all sides to get consumers to buy more, whistle carols constantly and drench your world in nog till the year's end—and it doesn't take a Grinch to get fed up with the most obvious Christmas cash grab: the schlocky, uninspired holiday movie.

By all means, deck the halls and be merry. Just don't expect any of the following films—the worst of the worst in terms of Christmas fare, as determined by critics, viewers or both—to make the season bright.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS 5 percent fresh on Rotten Tomatoes

I'm almost certain this movie wasn't intended as an even more tragic meditation on the soul-corroding meaninglessness of suburban life than *American Beauty*. But I'm not positive.

The characters' existences are so empty that Tim Allen feels the need to send letters to his entire office about his and his wife's plan to "skip Christmas" (which inexplicably causes an uproar); an entire neighborhood expends frantic energy trying to strong-arm empty nesters into a certain "normal person" level of themed lawn décor; and you're left with the sneaking suspicion that everyone's mildly disappointed in the daughter who joined the Peace Corps because that's just so damn *different*. Seriously, has this neighborhood never heard of Jews?

Christmas With the Kranks tries to tie a holiday bow around lying to your kids, denying your desires and conforming to unwanted levels of approved consumerism. But any movie that features a character reading *Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul* unironically is the work of the devil.

SURVIVING CHRISTMAS 7 percent fresh on Rotten Tomatoes

It's tragic when good actors wind up in truly terrible films.

I'm not referring to Ben Affleck, the best-known star in this studded cast. No, instead, mourn for Catherine O'Hara and James Gandolfini, both of whom look so tired and sour throughout that I suspect they, like any viewer, immediately regretted having signed on.

The premise is that a douchey adman, Affleck, pays a "normal" suburban family an exorbitant amount to let him crash their Christmas... and fascistically demands they adhere to every detail of his vision for the holiday.

Late in the game, the film tries to give depth to Affleck's near-sociopath by referencing his crappy Christmases growing up, but it's too little, too late: He has shown far too many of his "crazy asshole" cards already. Because of that, the tacked-on happy ending is unjustifiable.

If the movie was trying to illustrate its opening premise, though—that the holidays are usually miserable—it nailed it.

BY
JILLY GAGNON
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**THE DOG WHO
SAVED THE HOLIDAYS**
No reviews!

The easiest way to find the worst movies in any genre is to pull from made-for-TV fare.

In this canine cross between *Look Who's Talking* and *Home Alone 3*, yellow lab Zeus is voiced by Joey Lawrence, who sounds as bored as the viewers. Every gag is cliché, every character is insultingly insipid and, thanks to a lobotomized script, even the dog antics feel tired.

And that's before we address the Kevin James knockoff (his brother, Gary Valentine) as the misogynistic dad, the aggressively terrible parenting and the '70s-era mobster cliché forced into a modern Malibu setting.

The best, most original part of this movie is its leitmotif of inopportunistically timed farts.

JACK FROST
7 percent on Rotten Tomatoes

Believe it or not, there are two movies with this title, both terrible. But, at 20 percent, Michael Keaton's turn as a talking snowman is technically "too good" to make the cut. No, Keaton has to step aside for a Christmas horror movie

that features a snowman raping Shannon Elizabeth to death in a shower. (I hate that I wrote that sentence.)

But, if possible, forget for a moment that an entire room full of people OK'd that scene. *Jack Frost* is probably aiming for fans of low-budget, "intentionally bad" horror. This movie is both too terrible to watch and not terrible enough to be funny, falling into a brutally boring middle zone of, "I see what you were going for there. Oof."

**THE SANTA CLAUSE 3:
THE ESCAPE CLAUSE**
15 percent fresh on Rotten Tomatoes

I haven't seen the first two *Santa Clause* installments, but based on this film and residual fever dreams of *Christmas With the Kranks*, I feel confident proclaiming that if you want your holiday movie trite and cliché-ridden, cast Tim Allen.

The Santa Clause 3 is a Disney production, so it does at least boast an expensively rendered vision of the North Pole, complete with adorable child laborers and nightmarish, farting CGI reindeers.

Martin Short glams it up as Jack Frost, a legendary figure intent on stealing the show from Santa. His attempts are so blatant, in fact, that all the other legendary figures convene to discipline him...and then decide to let him apprentice at the North Pole. Conveniently idiotic decisions like that one drive the movie. Allen's eventual return to Santadom is so inevitable that it barely registers as a plot point. But in the spirit of the season, let's end this roundup on a hopeful note. If

IF THE MOVIE
WAS TRYING TO
ILLUSTRATE THAT
THE HOLIDAYS
ARE MISERABLE,
IT NAILED IT.

you waded through enough Christmas crap, you'll be rewarded with Short performing a Liberace-inspired number down a glittering Busby Berkeley staircase. I count it among the few blessings not only of this film but also of this entire assignment. **N**

TRITE CHRISTMAS:
One of the great
mysteries of the
season: Does Tim
Allen purposefully
choose to star
in bad holiday
movies, or do the
bad holiday movies
purposefully cast
Tim Allen?





THE NEWSWEEK HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

The best presents for the refined palette, the stoned palette and the nerdy palette...and what to get Taylor Swift



MUJI SLIPPERS

\$15 212-414-9024
Made of comfy microfiber and surprisingly stylish, they're the perfect accessory to help you "Netflix and chill" all winter long.

PAPIRMASS

\$8-\$14/month
PAPIRMASS.COM

Give a loved one the gift of good taste with this monthly subscription that delivers a print by an up-and-coming artist paired with a piece of contemporary literature.



TODDY COLD BREW SYSTEM

\$39.50 TODDYCAFE.COM

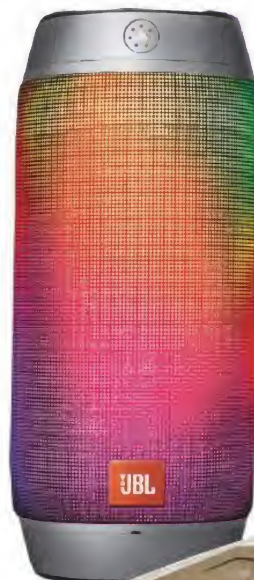
Coffee nerds insist there's only one right way to make cold brew. Those people are annoying but correct.



JBL PULSE 2 PORTABLE SPEAKER

\$199.95 JBL.COM

A waterproof Bluetooth speaker with an interactive light show built in? It's like a portable rave! Now if only drugs were waterproof.



BLAZE LASERLIGHT

\$190 BLAZE.CO

A light that attaches to your ride and projects a universal biking symbol nearly 20 feet ahead. Face it: All things should have lasers.



SWAGWAY X1 SMART BOARD

\$399 SWAGWAY.COM

Forget the hoverboard haters and slither away from your enemies with hands-free swagger.



FUEGO BOX \$27.99-\$29.95

FUEGOBOX.CO

In quarterly or monthly installments, Fuego delivers unusual hot sauce brands to the spicy food fiend in your life. It's like a warm, crackling hearth in your mouth.



FIIO X5 \$349

FIIO.NET

The FiiO portable music player gives listeners such true, lossless audio that it has the potential to even make the new Coldplay album sound good.



KNOX V2

\$23.95 KNOXLABS.COM

In 2015, virtual reality became actual reality, and Google Cardboard brought VR to the people. But Knox Labs makes our favorite viewer.



SPHERO BB-8

\$149.99 STORE.SPHERO.COM

BB-8, the breakout character of the latest *Star Wars* iteration, makes the once-cute R2-D2 look like a rusty toaster. This voice-commanded robotic companion is the droid you're looking for.

GOAL ZERO SOLAR CHARGER \$69.99

GOALZERO.COM

A portable, solar-powered phone charger for the outdoors. The perfect gift for those who want to save the environment while making it unpleasant for everyone else.



GIFTS TO RECONNECT WITH THE TEEN IN YOUR LIFE



HBO NOW
\$14.99/month;
HBONow.com

You'll never need to have the "birds and the bees" talk when they can just watch *Game of Thrones*.



FUN HOME DÉCOR SLICE OF PEPPERONI PIZZA PILLOW
\$29.37; Jet.com

Both cute and strange. Plus, last we checked, pizza is still bae.



ROOKIE YEAR-BOOK FOUR
\$29.95;
RookieMag.com

Like a best friend's zine; for teens who don't yet know that they're cool.

GIFTS FOR YOUR NEMESIS



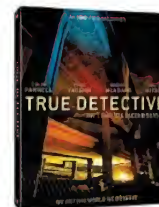
BLOCKBUSTER ON-DEMAND
\$20/month;
BlockbusterNow.com

Though it's now a service called Sling, remind them: No Netflix for the wicked.



BAG OF DICKS \$14;
ShipABagofDicks.com

Gummy phalluses: a sweet way to tell someone they are less than the world's best person?



SEASON 2 OF TRUE DETECTIVE
\$70.54;
BarnesAndNoble.com

On Blu-Ray, no less! What did this person do to deserve a droll kiss-off?



MAD MEN: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION BOX SET

\$109-\$190 VARIOUS SELLERS

Though *Mad Men* may be gone, Don Draper's day-drinking can now live on.



SEEK

\$199 THERMAL.COM

Ostensibly, heat-seeking tech for your smart-phone would be great for the hunting and hiking enthusiast. Personally, we plan to use it to cheat at laser tag.

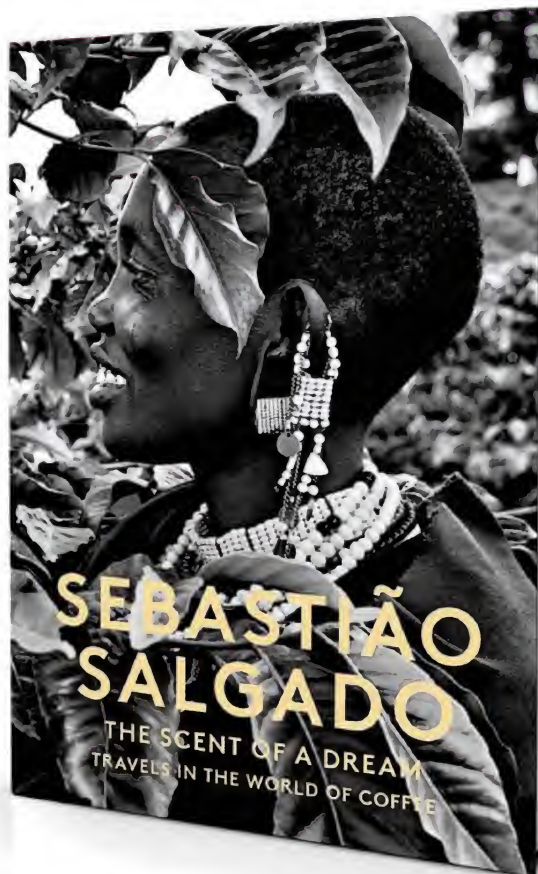


PARO THERAPY ROBOT

\$5,000

PAROROBOTS.COM

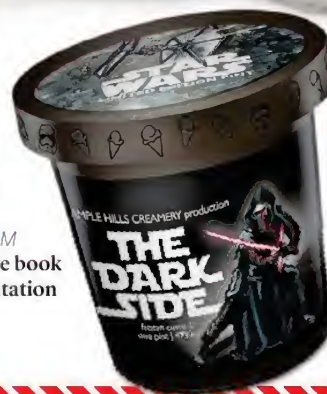
We first met super smart, hella cute therapy robot Paro on Netflix's *Master of None*. Just limited-released in the U.S.; any non-care specialists may have to wait to get one.



THE SCENT OF A DREAM BY SEBASTIÃO SALGADO

\$46.58 AMAZON.COM

A stunning coffee table book on coffee and the plantation workers who pick it.



STAR WARS ICE CREAM FOUR-PACK

\$36

AMPLEHILLS.COM

From beloved Brooklyn creamery Ample Hills, may the brain-freeze be with you.

GIFTS FOR YOUR BODEGA GUY



STONEWARE EGG CARTON

\$10: Kohls.com

A cute vessel for hard-boiled eggs. Shell out for the guy or gal who's always helping you out.



EXACT CHANGE

Price varies

Give them something they'll actually use. Be careful though. They may think it is a holiday miracle.



GROW YOUR OWN CATNIP

\$8.95: Priscillas

Petproducts.com

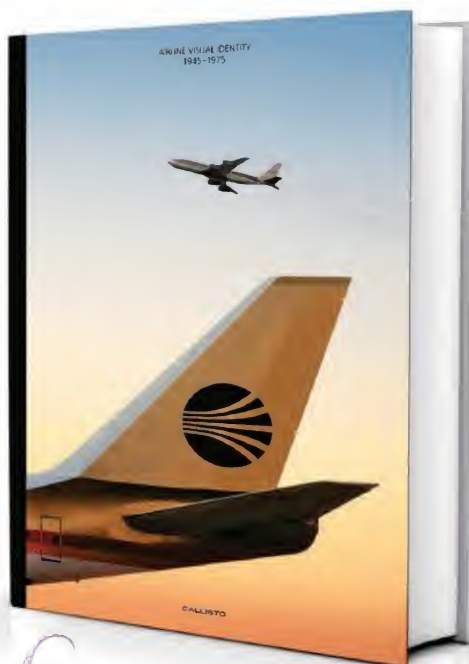
Because you never know when you'll need to have the bodega cat on your side.

AIRLINE VISUAL IDENTITY, 1945-1975

\$450

BARNESANDNOBLE.COM

This 14-pound, 400-plus page visual history of advertisements from aviation's golden age is one of the year's most interesting books—and one of its most beautiful.



GIFTS FOR T. SWIFT



DENTAL FLOSS

\$2.79; Drugstore.com

As the owner of the pearllest whites in music, Taylor is likely an avid flosser. Save her a trip to the bodega.



POLAROID REFILL

\$24; Amazon.com

The cover of 1989 was just a Polaroid pic of Tay-Tay. She's got to be out of film by now.



POOCH SELFIE SMARTPHONE ATTACHMENT

\$12;

PoochSelfie.com

Probably works on cats like Mer-edith Grey and Olivia Benson.

APL

\$120-\$185

ATHLETICPROPULSIONLABS.COM

Banned by the NBA, APL promises its shoes will help you run faster and jump higher. They're also Kim Kardashian-approved, but don't let that stop you.



U-TURN AUDIO TURNTABLE

\$179-\$309 UTURNAUDIO.COM

Modern, user-friendly turntables that can help anyone fake their way through conversations with audiophiles.



GIFTS FOR YOUR SIB WHO MOVED TO COLORADO



IHIT IPHONE 5 CASE

\$9.50; GrassCity.com

An iPhone case with a one-hitter really straddles the line between convenience and plain laziness.



MANTRY SNACK BOX

\$75-\$450;

Mantry.com

A giant box of monthly treats like artisan jerky and cashew butter? Yes, please!



SNOOP DOG G-PEN

\$49.95;

GPen.com

Like, of course Snoop Dogg has his name on the finest vaporizer available.

MOMENT LENS CASE

\$79.99 MOMENT.CO/SHOP

Turn your phone's camera into its smartest feature and really up the ante on your brunch photo shoots.





PRE-MED

Can't wait till summer to sample the delights of the Mediterranean? Head for Margaret River in Western Australia

ON DARK midwinter days, the Mediterranean can feel like a torment to Europeans yearning for the glistening waters off the coast of Corsica or Sicily, or the fresh seafood grilled in beachside cafés from Greece to Spain. The sea is cold, and most of those cafés are empty or closed. But for the sun-starved who can't quite make it through to spring without warm breezes, hillside vineyards and barbecued fish, don't worry—if you

can afford the fare to the other side of the planet, there's this place called Margaret River you need to know about. It will more than keep you going until the Costa Brava, Côte D'Azur and Amalfi Coast open for business again.

I have been visiting this Western Australia town and region for the past 25 years, and during that time it has become a wonderful winter alternative to the Mediterranean. The climate has always

BY
GRAHAM BOYNTON
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PHILIP GOSTELOW/ANZENBERGER/REDUX

+
WINE ALL YOU
WANT: Sun, surf,
great food and fine
vineyards make
Margaret River an
attractive roost for
snowbirds.

been wonderful during the Northern Hemisphere's grim months—the warmest month is February, when the average high is 82 degrees—but Margaret River also now attracts visitors because it hosts one of the great gastronomic events of the food lover's calendar. Since 2008, the Margaret River Gourmet Escape has attracted big names from the food world. This year, the irascible British chef and restaurateur Marco Pierre White and Ashley Palmer-Watts, executive chef of Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck Group, were among those featured. The event, which takes place in venues throughout the whole 865-square-mile Margaret River region and this year attracted 18,000 visitors, features culinary master classes, beach barbecues and a daylong fair at the Leeuwin Estate winery, where local food specialists, vintners, craft brewers, cake makers and chocolatiers demonstrate their skills.

Margaret River, the gateway town to the vast territory of Western Australia, is a three-hour drive from Perth. It sits a little south of the river of the same name and is a retreat for wealthy Perth residents, hikers and surfers. It is also now a place for the degustation set to enjoy restaurants at some of the region's 215 wineries, which serve organic and biodynamic vegetables, grass-fed beef and lamb, venison, marron (freshwater crayfish) and farmed barramundi from Cone Bay (in Western Australia's northeastern seaboard) along with the region's superb wines. On a recent trip, I ate at both Cullen Wines (the most biodynamic of all the vineyards) and Leeuwin Estate, and I recommend both for their fresh seafood and locally sourced vegetables. Leeuwin's award-winning restaurant—it was the West Australian Good Food Guide's Restaurant of the Year in 2012—looks out onto lawns surrounded by a large forest of tall karri trees. Cullen's granite and timber restaurant is set in the vineyards and is a short walk from the estate's biodynamic gardens.

Although it is responsible for about 3 percent of Australia's total wine production, Margaret River contributes 20 percent of the country's premium wines, among them Cullen's Diana Madeline cabernet blend, Moss Wood's cabernet sauvignon and Leeuwin's Art Series chardonnay. All of them have won major accolades, including *Decanter* World Wine Awards and *Wine Spectator* awards. Unlike Australia's better-known hothouse wine regions, such as the Hunter and Barossa valleys in the southeast of the country, Margaret River offers a stable, Mediterranean-type climate that over the past 10 years has produced more consistent weather



patterns than any other wine region on Earth. "The strong maritime influence means we miss out on extremes," says Moss Wood's owner and winemaker Keith Mugford. "In southeast Australia, temperatures can go through the roof, [but] we have great sea breezes that perform like giant air conditioners."

Margaret River's best-known varietals are chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon, but the region also produces riesling, sauvignon blanc-sémillon blends, pinot noir and many others. That makes for a lot of tastings if you're determined to get a broad sense of what the region has to offer. Despite the presence of a large police bus that serves as a mobile Breathalyzer lab and is known locally as the "booze bus"—I was Breathalyzed three times in 48 hours,

"I WAS BREATHALYZED THREE TIMES IN 48 HOURS."

which is more than I have been in my life—I was able to get through tastings at five of the top vineyards and at each found wines I would add to my modest cellar.

For all of the attention the region has been attracting for its food and wine, Margaret River has another pull: the natural beauty that persuaded so many locals to move to the area in the first place. The region is bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west and is surrounded by national forests. Sparsely populated beaches line much of the 75-mile coastline, and the waves that break off those beaches make the region one of the world's great surfing destinations. At Margaret River Main Break, also known as Surfers Point, you can either join the surfers riding the 13-foot-high waves or join the crowds who gather to watch on a wooden viewing platform on a promontory above the ocean. It's a spectacular spot and a thrilling spectacle when the surfers are out. And it's a view you won't find anywhere in the Mediterranean, at any time of the year. ■



THE CURATED LIFE

BAGS UNDER MY EYES

The Louis Vuitton show in Paris affirms that the power of brands works in museums too

MICHAEL BURKE, Louis Vuitton's CEO, is doing his best to convince me that there is a link between Christian Dior adding his initials to his hard-sided Louis Vuitton suitcase in the middle of the last century and street artist Stephen Sprouse daubing graffiti over the top of the hallowed monogrammed canvas case at the beginning of this century. Apparently it comes down to "tagging."

I am not sure that I quite buy the Sprouse-Dior connection, but if anyone can sell it to me, it is Burke: He has a mind that moves at a speed way above what I suspect to be the legal limit for synaptic activity, and he is taking me on a personal guided tour of the "Louis Vuitton" exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris.

The exhibition opened less than a month after the Paris attacks, and so the timing is perfect, as it celebrates what is so wonderful about France. The Grand Palais, a Belle Époque exhibition hall, is a national monument. In England, we have the NEC in Birmingham or Olympia in London; in France they have the Grand Palais. As the name suggests, it is large and palatial, more than big enough to accommodate an exhibition of the work of Madame Vigée-LeBrun, a Picasso show and a Louis Vuitton exhibition at the same time. It is, says Burke, a juxtaposition that a generation ago would have been inconceivable. Back then, culture and commerce were rigorously separated. The business he now helms has done much to close that divide, and this show is evi-

dence of the change that has come about.

The first thing one sees upon entering is a giant portrait of Vuitton as a young man. When he was 14, he was a penniless Dick Whittington figure who walked from the Jura Mountains to Paris, where he made his name and his fortune, starting as a professional packer and dying a rich industrialist. This portrait is not an old painting; it is a 21st-century work by the celebrated Chinese artist Yan Pei-Ming, based on forensic reconstructive techniques, using photographs of the prosperous old man. And that is part of the fun of this show: It is sort of sequential, sort of thematic and sort of not. You will find, for instance, the real Noé bag, which was devised in 1932 to carry five bottles of champagne, alongside its 1980 reappearance as a woman's handbag. Bags from a century ago are placed alongside models still in production, as if challenging the viewer to spot the differences.

The fashion or luxury brand museum show is a feature of the modern museumscape. The Alexander McQueen show is a crowd-puller, right up there with Van Gogh and King Tut. Patek Philippe, Chanel and Hermès have all recently had major shows at the Saatchi Gallery in London. Last year, Cartier had a big show at the Grand Palais, and now it is Vuitton's turn—although the French luggage house has been here before. In 1900, it exhibited at the famous Exposition Universelle, where it was renowned for a display that mimicked a ride in a railway carriage, complete

BY
NICHOLAS FOULKES

with scenery on large rollers. This time, Vuitton is back as the star of its own show—and it has even re-created the railway “journey” of 1900.

This is no longer a case of big brands seeking the validation of a major cultural institution. Yes, of course the museum benefits and receives support for more—how does one say—curatorial shows, but these shows have genuine popular appeal. I saw crowds queuing in the rain to get inside the Patek exhibition in London. On the Sunday I went to Paris, Vuitton was packing them in, and friends complained that when it opened they had to queue for two hours.

If you like looking at old luggage as much as I do, there is much to enjoy here, from the tiny “flower” trunks that were given to clients as gifts during the Belle Époque (and of which so few have survived that they are now more valuable than the larger trunks) to a DJ box designed by Helmut Lang in 1996 for the safe transport of precious vinyl. Around 1,000 objects and documents are exhibited. Thus, the visitor can trace various narrative threads, such as the birth of soft-sided luggage with the canvas and leather steamer bag that was conceived as a laundry bag and made its debut in 1901. Or one can examine the genesis of the modern handbag, which can be seen in a series of black grained-leather bags of ascending size from 1900 to 1910 that were

designed to hold women’s gloves in the days before motorcars had glove compartments.

One can just gawp at luggage owned by Elizabeth Taylor, Christian Dior, Sacha Guitry or Errol Flynn’s wife Lili Damita, among others. Damien Hirst’s butterfly trunks are on view, as are Sprouse’s graffiti bags and Yves Saint Laurent’s book trunk. And then, amid the celebrity relics,

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one comes across a Courbet canvas of an oak tree to illustrate the primary material with which the founder and eponym worked.

This show has almost universal appeal. Today’s world is incredibly brand-literate, and there are probably few communities on the face of the planet unaware of, say, the products of Louis Vuitton, Hermès or Chanel. Once upon a time, they were the names of individual craftspersons. Now they have become cultural phenomena, and as such they deserve investigation. And this sort of show is part investigation and part of the cultural phenomenon.

After a couple of hours, I begin to see where Burke is coming from with his tag comment. Luggage was painted with its owner’s initials to tell pieces apart on the quayside or railway platform. But very soon a simple identification technique morphed into an exhibitionist form of self-expression. Take, for instance, Guitry’s trunk: There is an extravagance about the lettering that would not look out of place on a music hall poster. And Paul Poiret’s trunk with its visual pun of a picture of a pea (*pois*) and some vertical lines (*raies*) goes beyond mere identification, especially when one notes that the famous couturier also rearranged the lattice of ribbon inside the lid. He was indeed tagging his Louis Vuitton trunk, just as Sprouse was tagging those early aughts Keepalls and, one could argue, just as Louis Vuitton is tagging the Grand Palais. **N**

**HELLBOUND FOR
LEATHER:** The
Paris exhibit allows
viewers to see the
evolution of some
of Louis Vuitton’s
iconic carry-ons.



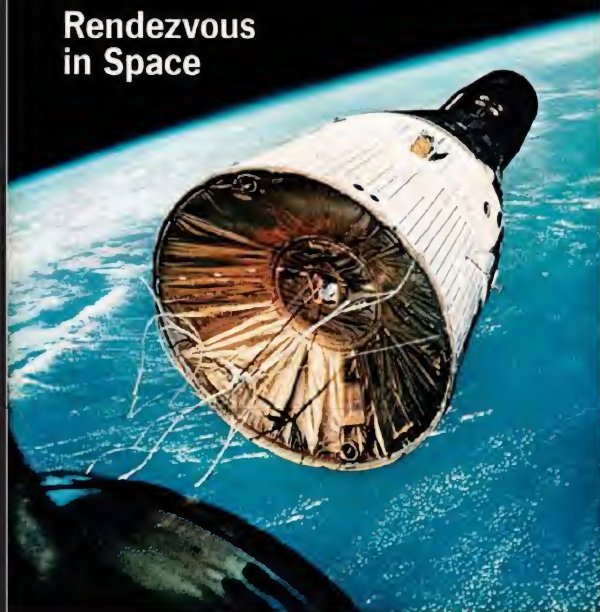
REWIND

50
YEARS

Newsweek

DECEMBER 27, 1965 35c

Rendezvous
in Space



DECEMBER 27, 1965

IN "ONLY IN AMERICA"

“For more than 20 centuries, doctors have sworn the Hippocratic oath 'to help the sick according to my ability.' But last week it developed that some 2 million elderly Americans

must now take their own oath to qualify for medical assistance—a loyalty oath. Forms for the new Medicare program require elderly applicants not already covered by other Federal insurance programs to certify that they 'are not now and during the last 12 months have not been a member of any' Communist organization.”